Commentary
March 2005

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Terry Teachout

Books in Review
Wilfred M. McClay • Kevin Shapiro • David G. Roskies
Jakub J. Grygiel • Thomas Meaney

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Commentary

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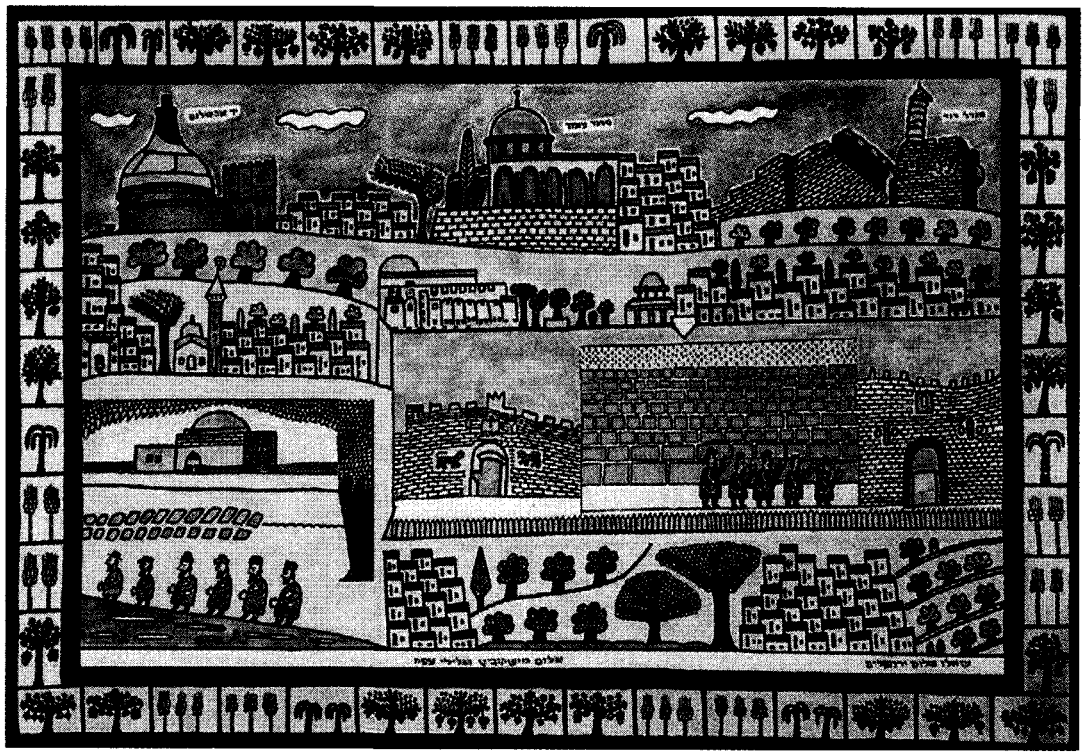

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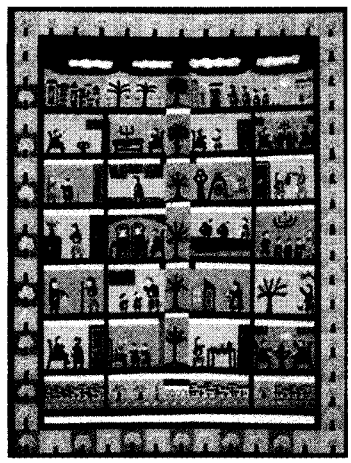

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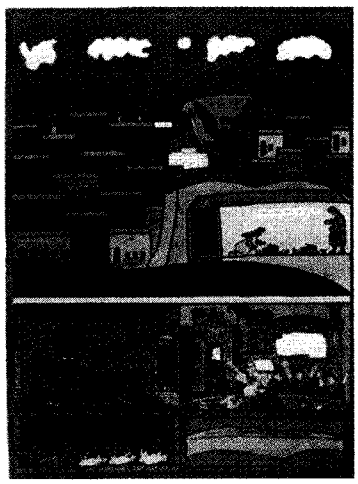

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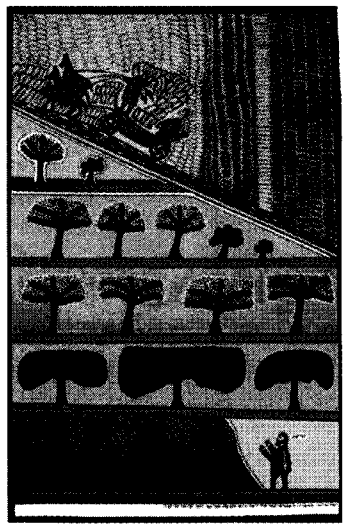

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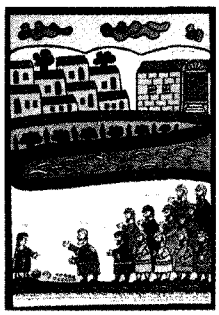

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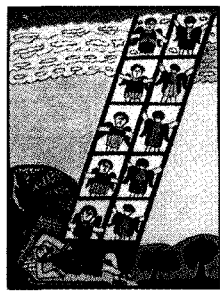

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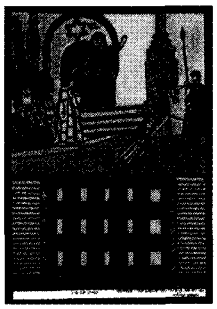

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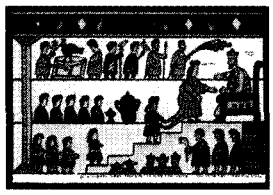

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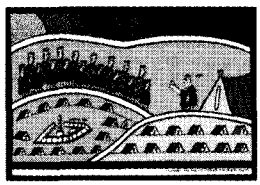

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Commentary
March 2005

Letters from Readers

Islam and the West

To the Editor:

There were three remarkable articles about the Islamic world in the December issue of Commentary. Although I agree with most of their content, I should like to add a bit of refinement to each one.

In "The Islamization of Europe?," David Pryce-Jones outlines a deepening problem: the lack of Muslim integration into European society. But some of the measures taken by European governments and supported by Mr. Pryce-Jones might be exacerbating the problem. One notable case is the ban on the wearing of the *hijab* by girls in public schools in France. Whether the *hijab* is really a Qur'anic requirement is debatable, but those who believe it is should be free to adhere to the practice. By disallowing that freedom, France is employing forced assimilation, not integration. History shows that this is often counter-productive.

On the other hand, some other policies that Mr. Pryce-Jones denounces as examples of "Islamophile correctness" may not be so bad. One example is the planned removal of a statue of St. James Matamoros ("the Moor slayer") at the cathedral of Santiago, Spain "lest it give offense to Muslims." Mr. Pryce-Jones may need to be reminded that the enemy of the West is not Muslims but militant Islamists. Respect for Muslim faith and culture would go a long way toward winning the hearts and minds of the former and marginalizing the latter. And statues can indeed have a painful effect on the emotions; would not an effigy of Torquemada be offensive to Jews?

In "Islam and Freedom," James Q. Wilson discusses Turkey's process of westernization, marking its genesis in the positivist vision of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. I must disagree. Westernization actually commenced under the Ottoman empire in the early 19th century, and it had remarkable achievements to its credit, including a proto-democracy. The first Ottoman parliament assembled a half-century before the reign of Atatürk, and Ottoman public life was much more diverse than in the succeeding era of monolithic "Kemalism." There were many Jewish, Armenian, and Greek members in the Ottoman parliament—something that ceased to be the case under the homogenizing nationalism of the Republic.

Atatürk is, of course, a founding father worthy of much respect, but many Turks today feel the need to move beyond some of the excesses of Kemalism. This desire for change is hardly identical with counterrevolutionary Islamism, as some hard-core Kemalists claim. Rather, it is a sign of progress.

Times have changed a great deal since Atatürk: science, for example, is no longer a force that promises to send "all religions [to] the bottom of the sea," as Mr. Wilson quotes Kemal. To the contrary, it is sometimes a force that converts atheists to theism; such was the case with the recent declaration of faith by the British philosopher and arch-atheist Anthony Flew.

The larger point is that religion is not about to wither away in the modern world. Concerning Islam in particular, the great question is whether we Muslims will be able to express our passion for the divine in the context of a civil and democratic order. If we can deconstruct the awkward alliance between "The Left and the Islamists," to cite the title of the essay by Joshua Kurlantzick, and channel "Islamic muscle" into a conservative force that aims not to destroy the West but to stand for faith and morality within it,

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then there is hope. As a Muslim, I believe this is possible and will strive to make it real.

MUSTAFA AKYOL
Istanbul, Turkey

Letters on the individual articles mentioned here, with replies by their authors, follow below—ED.

Islam and Freedom

TO THE EDITOR:

James Q. Wilson summarizes very well the case for hoping that we might create a liberal regime in Iraq ["Islam and Freedom," December 2004]. But in that country, as in all the Muslim countries Mr. Wilson deals with, there is a cultural problem too little discussed in the West.

For economic and other reasons, we take it for granted that government is most desirable when it permits a species of liberalism—or "freedom"—in which the space and will of the individual are highly valued. But in countries with a long history of despotism, this is not the case. In many Muslim societies, and especially among Arabs, populations are comfortable with despotism in a way utterly foreign to most Westerners (though Europe has had its own exceptions to this rule in the 1930's and after World War II).

In such a system, the dissent that is normal in a democracy is felt not only by rulers but even by many subjects as a threat to social and political stability. Despotism can thus command the loyalty of subjects who hope to survive in relative security and comfort by keeping their noses clean. Although this trade-off is one that we in the West, with our traditional suspicion of unlimited power, are unwilling to accept, we make a grave mistake if we underestimate the willingness of others—especially in Muslim societies—to accept it.

HERB GREER
Salisbury, England

TO THE EDITOR:

James Q. Wilson's well-thought-out and informative article is marred by a throw-away comparison of modern Islamic states with the 16th-century Roman Catholic Church. I take specific exception to Mr. Wilson's statement that the "Protestant Reformation helped set the stage for religious and even political freedom in the West." A more correct formulation would give credit to the Catholic Counter-Reformation as well.

Even better would be to acknowledge that the Church itself, as an institution, set the stage for religious and political freedom. The Church was the greatest benefactor of Renaissance art and science, and the preserver of Greek and Roman philosophy and science through its universities (which were hardly like *madrassas*), libraries, monasteries, and theologians. Then as now, the Church's doctrine was one of "free will"—a doctrine necessary for freedom and democracy.

STEPHEN KELLY
Saint Paul, Minnesota

JAMES Q. WILSON writes:

Herb Greer suggests that Muslims are more "comfortable with despotism" than are Westerners. How does he know that? I am deeply suspicious of the unsupported view that people are "comfortable" with authoritarian rule. The same could be said of the West from the time of imperial Rome to the 17th century; but freedom, once offered, proved an irresistible lure to people. I do not know why anyone should think Muslims will be different.

Stephen Kelly does not want me to explain Western freedom by reference to the Reformation. He is quite correct; if I had more space, I could have written at length about the tensions that the Reformation created, or discussed the fact that neither Martin Luther nor John Calvin supported personal freedom. But the religious split they helped create did give birth to many Protestant sects, which in time secular authorities had to accommodate by a policy of toleration. (I develop this point in an earlier article, "The Reform Islam Needs," in the Autumn 2002 *City Journal*.) I am skeptical of Mr. Kelly's claim that the Counter-Reformation and the Church's support of art and literature encouraged freedom. It was the papacy that, after the Counter-Reformation, expanded the Inquisition and put Galileo on trial.

Mustafa Akyol rightly reminds us of the changes in Turkey under the Ottoman Empire. In the 19th century, the Tanzimat, or high council of reform, did leave an important legacy, one that permitted the emergence of the Young Turks and after them the dissident officers among whom Mustafa Kemal was a leading figure. But it was Kemal who took the ideas of the Tanzimat and converted piecemeal change into the beginnings of modern Turkey.

Islam and Europe

TO THE EDITOR:

David Pryce-Jones's article is excellent, and I wish it had been written 30 years ago ["The Islamization of Europe?," December 2004]. From the mid-1970's through the mid-1980's, I used to ask my colleagues in the political-science and history departments of universities at which I taught, or at national and international scientific meetings, whether Western Christianity had the wherewithal to withstand a Muslim onslaught. They had no clue what I was referring to. They could not conceive of an Islam on the march in the modern world as, centuries earlier, it had been on the march across the entire Mediterranean region and parts of Asia. Unfortunately, many of these same individuals and their contemporary counterparts persist today in the same misunderstanding.

In my view, however, the article is also incomplete. Mr. Pryce-Jones either does not mention or insufficiently emphasizes three interrelated developments that have aided Islam's spread throughout Europe, the United States, Africa, and elsewhere. These are the world-wide resurgence of religiosity, with its accompanying spirit of anti-intellectualism to which the young (including the educated young) are especially vulnerable; the increasing dependence of the West on oil and the resultant enrichment of the (mostly Saudi) families that control it, whose wealth has helped fund the massive immigration of Arab Muslims into Western societies as well as religious and educational in-

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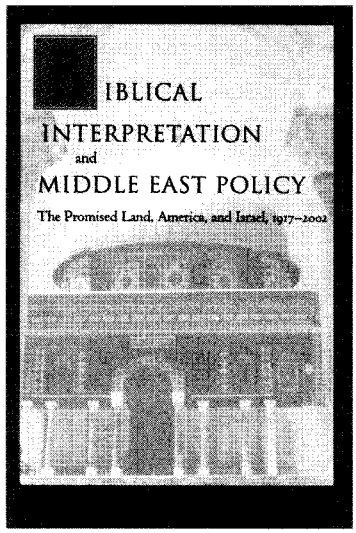

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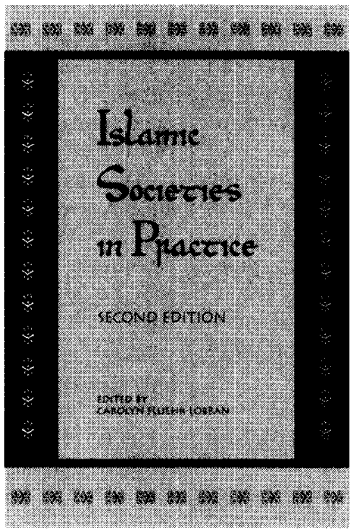

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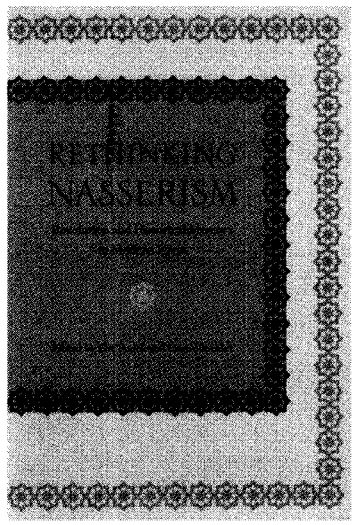

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stitutions that have been used to preach and teach hatred of Jews, Christians, and Western life; and the revival of anti-Semitism throughout Christian Europe, especially among its elites.

SHELDON F. GOTTLIEB
Boynton Beach, Florida

TO THE EDITOR:

An Israeli friend who lost family in the Holocaust remarked to me recently that Europe used to have a minority that was well-educated, hard-working, productive, and integrated; now, she added, Europe has the minority it deserves.

A fine, cynical remark—but Europe must win the demographic and cultural war that its Islamists are waging against it. Unfortunately, as David Pryce-Jones points out, many Europeans are blind even to the existence of this war. One hopes they prove right to put their trust in the long-term durability of their liberal democracies, but wishes are not horses, and neither are hopes.

KEVIN JON WILLIAMS
Wynnewood, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR:

When the Soviets imposed a blockade on Berlin in June 1948 and told the West to get out, the British and French were all packed and ready to leave. It was the United States that informed both the Soviets and our allies that we were in Berlin to stay. Whereupon, as if on cue, the Western intelligentsia predicted that Communization of the West was the wave of the future and that the best we could hope for was some sort of accommodation with the Soviets.

Now, as David Pryce-Jones documents, we are being similarly told that it is our duty and obligation to accommodate ourselves to Islam and, indeed, as the London *Guardian* has argued, to embrace it. Our encounter with Soviet Communism ended well. How will this one end?

LESLIE DALE
San Leandro, California

TO THE EDITOR:

David Pryce-Jones's penetrating article exposes a development more dangerous by far than earlier Islamic invasions that were accomplished by force of arms. Whether Europeans can summon the clarity and strength necessary to defend against today's politically correct infiltration remains to be seen. But the European predicament also proves the wisdom of President Bush's strategy, which is to fight the global war against radical Islam by going on the offensive and by seeking to transform the political culture of the Middle East.

The idea that Afghanistan and Iraq might join Turkey in choosing liberalism and democracy over theocratic and autocratic rule, and thereby provide a compelling model for the suppressed majority in Iran, is the American coalition's bold counter to what radical Islam is looking to achieve in Europe and beyond. It is ironic that, in the millennial struggle many Europeans have not yet recognized we are all in, their own best hope for strategic deliverance may well lie in the "wrong war in the wrong place at the wrong time" they have so vehemently disparaged.

MICHAEL BALCH
Iowa City, Iowa

TO THE EDITOR:

If David Pryce-Jones's pessimism becomes a reality, as the facts thus far seem to portend, then the question mark in his article's title can be erased. Recently, the Muslim community in Bradford, England was able to have the town council install a publicly funded, modified *madrassa* for Muslim children, and it has been working toward instituting a local system of *shari'a* law.

Why has the liberal West sat still while such things go on in its midst? There is an idea abroad among us that good and evil are retrograde, simplistic concepts; that other cultures would be more in tune with us were it not for our own airs of superiority; and that any adverse outcomes creeping our way are our own fault.

Western Europe, having been jolted by incidents like the murder of the Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh, may be beginning to think more realistically about the problems it faces, and we can only hope that it is not too late. But we in the United States are faced with similar (though lagging) realities. Several years ago, in *American Jihad*, Steven Emerson reported that sermons denouncing Americans and Jews were being delivered in mosques throughout the country. Some mosques have been under investigation for raising funds for terrorist groups like Hamas.

Authorities here and in Europe know about Islamist incitement. But because restrictions on speech, assembly, and movement are anathema in our societies, reports like Emerson's about realities on the ground tend to be denied or dismissed. We need to remember that in times of war, icons like Abraham Lincoln and FDR permitted far more profound restrictions on civil liberties than does today's Patriot Act.

FREDERIC WILE
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

I enjoyed David Pryce-Jones's article very much, but I fear he misquoted Hilaire Belloc. Belloc did not "boast" that "We have got the Gatling gun, and they have not." The lines Mr. Pryce-Jones alludes to are from Belloc's poem "The Modern Traveler," which was published in 1899 when the Gatling gun was already an antiquated weapon. The correct quotation is: "Whatever happens, we have got,/The Maxim gun, and they have not." The lines are spoken by an unpleasant character named Blood; Belloc, who opposed imperialism, was not himself boasting of "Western cultural and military superiority."

WILLIAM KUPERSMITH
Iowa City, Iowa

TO THE EDITOR:

David Pryce-Jones writes that Muslims in Western countries face a choice between defining themselves as law-abiding citizens who seek to live by "common values" or as Muslims exempt from having to make any concessions to the faith of others. But if all citizens have the right to self-expression, should not Muslims feel entitled to live on their own terms—so long as they are not violent—and should not society respect their choice?

BENJAMIN SCHENKIER
Chicago, Illinois

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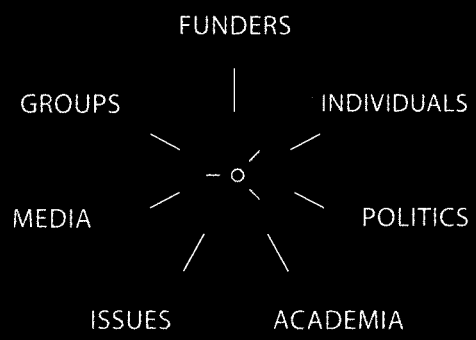

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DAVID PRYCE-JONES writes:

Sheldon F. Gottlieb regrets that "The Islamization of Europe?" was not written 30 years ago. At that time, Arab and other nationalists had succeeded in pushing the colonial European powers out of the Middle East and everywhere else. It was not yet evident that Arab nationalism would produce societies from which so many desperate people would long to escape, nor that men like Sayyid Qutb and Ayatollah Khomeini would offer the alternative of political Islamism.

Settling in their millions in the various countries of Europe, Muslim immigrants have an identity crisis: whether to accept or reject assimilation. Fired by Islamism, plenty of voices among them are calling for outright colonialism in reverse. Sheikh Omar Bakr Muhammad, for instance, recently told Muslims in Britain that they must now consider themselves at war. An Islamic state, he said, had to be established in Britain. Six hundred delegates at one of his conferences were shown images of the planes crashing into the World Trade Center; in the words of a press report, "the rapt watchers thrust their fists in the air and chanted 'Allahu Akhbar!' (God is great!)" They then all cheered the name of bin Laden.

Europeans have a corresponding identity crisis, as they decide what to make of this large and growing minority in their midst, particularly the Islamists who aspire to colonize them. Kevin Jon Williams, Leslie Dale, Michael Balch, and Frederic Wile express doubt that European civilization now has the necessary resilience to continue in its sweet old ways: either Europe will succumb, they suggest, or there will be a backlash of the kind experienced in Holland as a result of the murder of the film-maker Theo van Gogh by a local Islamist. Down either of these roads lies every prospect of social disintegration and violence, as I indicated in citing Hilaire Belloc's famous lines. When those lines are quoted, the Gatling habitually replaces the Maxim gun, but I should have done as William Kupersmith did, and checked the source.

Benjamin Schenkier suggests that Muslims should feel entitled to live in non-Muslim countries "on their own terms," so long as they are not violent. More than a plea for tolerance, this is in effect a commendation of reverse colonialism, of the kind that the likes of those 600 bin Laden supporters seize on eagerly and skillfully.

Mustafa Akyol also pleads for reverse colonialism, albeit in a soft form. The wearing of the *hijab* may indeed be more symbolic than anything else, but the French have decided that the symbol challenges social and ethical values that they struggled for at great cost to themselves, and that cannot now be compromised. The statue of St. James Matamoros, likewise, is part of Spanish history. The Moors were once in Andalusia as conquerors and colonialists, and they gave as good as they got. Are Spaniards really to repudiate the personalities—and the centuries—that went into the making of their nation and their identity? And if they were to do so, why and how would that "show respect for Muslim faith and culture" rather than the surrender of respect for their own faith and culture? Finally, there are effigies and portraits of Torquemada, and Jews do not ask for their removal.

Islamists and the Left

TO THE EDITOR:

Joshua Kurlantzick cites an allegedly criminal incident involving the activist attorney Lynne Stewart and her client, Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman, as an example of a dangerous partnership between the Left and radical Islamists ["The Left and the Islamists," December 2004].

But Stewart is not a very important figure on the Left, locally, nationally, or internationally. She is a skillful, "grandmotherly" (in Mr. Kurlantzick's word) figure, armed with a law degree. If found guilty in her criminal trial, she will serve time and be expelled from the bar. But is she a threat to our democratic way of life, or just a nasty irritant? And how many figures like her exist on the left side of the political landscape in the U.S.?

Mr. Kurlantzick writes that "[t]he partnership between Islamists and the international Left poses its most immediate threat to Jews." But the perpetrators of the bombing of a Spanish commuter train in March 2004 were surely not looking for Jews to exterminate. As for the French Trotskyists, SDS types, Weatherpeople, and British radicals discussed by Mr. Kurlantzick, they are indeed a motley collection of totalitarian misfits, but have these tiny groups successfully penetrated the large Islamic workforce in Europe so as to create a bona-fide threat to Europe's one million Jews?

I do not doubt that the hard Left remains convinced that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend," and that this may account for the sympathy some feel toward Islamists. But clear-minded observers should accurately measure the political weight of this phenomenon.

LAWRENCE GULOTTA
Brooklyn, New York

TO THE EDITOR:

In "The Left and the Islamists," Joshua Kurlantzick uses the clichéd language of "Left" and "Right" to draw strikingly one-sided conclusions about the recent history of U.S. encounters with religious fundamentalists and terrorists.

Just as remarkable as the "shifting allegiances" of the radical Left with regard to Islamic groups has been the shifting position of U.S. officialdom toward those same groups. Viewed from a global perspective, the latter phenomenon has been far more important in determining the current state of world affairs. Mr. Kurlantzick fails to consider the possibility that the views of the Left might themselves have been influenced by these shifts in U.S. policy, rather than the other way around.

The U.S., like the world as a whole, needs to find realistic strategies to confront the threat of terrorist organizations. Knocking over a few straw men in order to score points against your political opponents might be a pleasant diver-

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sion, but in the end gets us nowhere.

RAJAN VENKATARAMAN
Monash, Australia

JOSHUA KURLANTZICK writes:

Lawrence Gulotta suggests that my choice of Lynne Stewart, not "a very important figure on the Left," undermines my thesis. Nor does he think that links among the far Left and Islamists rise to the level of truly grave threats.

I used Stewart merely as an illustration, as representing a generation; my case hardly rested on her alone, but on a plethora of Islamist links with the hard Left that I described in some detail. And even the Stewart case goes beyond her to involve other, more prominent figures on the political far Left. The blind sheik was represented not only by Stewart but also by former U.S. attorney general Ramsey Clark, one of the intellectual leaders of the American Left and a founder of International ANSWER. (Clark has not been charged with any crimes.) And Stewart has been supported in her fight by some of the most prominent attorneys in America.

Stewart's case has also been covered prominently by *Democracy Now*, the flagship program of many radio stations in the Pacifica group, the most organized medium on the far Left. Stewart herself has appeared several times on *Democracy Now*, where she has received a highly respectful hearing and has been able to count on her host's skimming over Sheik Omar's alleged crimes as well as his noxious views on a range of social issues.

As for whether the Green-Red alliance is the gravest or most immediate threat to the world, or even to the Jews, I did not say and do not believe that. I did and do insist that it is a threat, and to Jews most immediately.

Rajan Venkataraman, for his part, is convinced that the views of the far Left are themselves greatly influenced by how the U.S. government acts toward Islamists and the Islamic world in general. I do not doubt that if George W. Bush were suddenly to retire and hand the Oval Office directly to Jimmy Carter, the far Left would have to recalibrate some of its thinking. But in many respects the actions of the far Left are immune to particular government policies or administrations. This was so during the cold war, as David Horowitz shows, when the strategies pursued by the far Left changed little even as the official American posture underwent a number of shifts and even as the Soviets' horrific crimes were revealed to the world.

The same is true today, when, for example, both the actions and the rhetoric of anti-globalization groups on the far Left have remained essentially constant even as the White House has gone from Bill Clinton to George W. Bush and as global trade institutions have begun to take leftist criticisms into account. But this is another way in which the far Left shares something with hardcore Islamists. After all, Islamist opposition to the U.S. and to liberal values has hardly been affected by who happens to be President or what policies he pursues; famously, the plans for 9/11 were laid even as the Israel-Palestinian peace process was at its most optimistic.

The threat, moreover, is not necessarily one of direct violence—though Hizballah, among others, certainly has no aversion to violence. The threat is that this strange alliance will bleed into mainstream politics, as it already has done in Europe through the medium of the Islamic workforce, and will start to poison the political discourse of the mainstream Left, of which I consider myself a member. The solution, as Mustafa Akyol suggests, is for the Muslim world, and the Western Left, to turn away from unholy partners and to channel their energies into the context of civil, liberal, and democratic order.

Sudan

TO THE EDITOR:

I have read Roger Sandall's "Can Sudan Be Saved?" [December 2004] with delight; the article neatly summarizes the literature on that country's tragic past and present.

Sudan is indeed on the verge of total disintegration, due to the failures of its own government. The most important challenges to its continued existence as a unitary nation-state include the rise of militant Islam and the insistence on establishing a theocratic state based on Islamic law (*shari'a*); the ruthless pursuit by the ruling elite of a policy whereby the Arabic language and the Arabized racial groups will dominate; efforts by these same elites to muzzle the voices of the supposedly marginalized areas through repression and torture, and to pit the marginalized groups against each other in escalating ethnic wars.

While a peaceful settlement of the conflict between north and south is imminent, possibly leading to southern secession after a transitional period of six years, other regions of the country—Darfur, the east, and the far north—have begun to assert their own grievances against Khartoum, including by means of armed struggle. At the moment, these groups are not fighting to break away, but if the conflicts drag on for as long as the southern wars, and if the government keeps focusing on a military solution, more and more frustrated groups are likely to opt out of the union. If Sudan is to be saved as a state, the task can only be accomplished by the Sudanese themselves.

Mr. Sandall also questions the ability of Western humanitarians to rescue the Sudanese from poverty, man-made destruction, and death; he is right to do so. Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) is the largest, most expensive, and longest-running humanitarian project in history. Now into its 15th year, it has accumulated a price tag of $3 billion and has nothing to show for it in terms of basic services like health clinics, schools, or roads. It has not even saved that many lives. Half of the estimated 2 million deaths from the civil war have occurred during the years of OLS's operation.

Mr. Sandall is to be commended for highlighting the sacrifices made by individual aid workers. But, as he suggests, the larger failure of the humanitarian effort is the result of government intransigence together with the particular philosophy of

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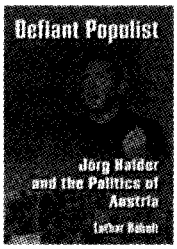

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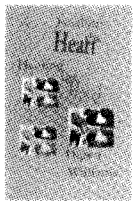

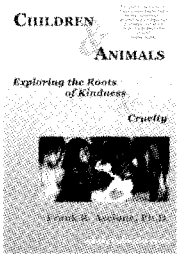

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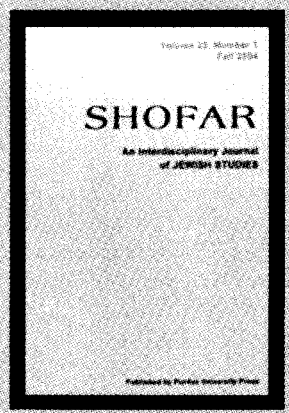

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emergency aid that informs Western welfare programs. Precisely because of their emergency nature, such aid operations focus on the "most vulnerable," a loose concept that is culturally out of place in Sudan; they have not invested in programs (like educational ones) with the potential to reduce violence.

JOK MADUT JOK
Loyola Marymount University
Los Angeles, California

TO THE EDITOR:

Roger Sandall's article paints a disturbing portrait of the 21st century's first case of genocide and ethnic cleansing. I am probably not the only person to have noticed that Western leftists, quick to protest any violation—real or imagined—of human rights in Israel or the United States, have been virtually silent about what is happening in Sudan. In the racial hierarchy of "human rights" concerns, blacks being massacred by Arabs have, it seems, little value.

I partially disagree with Mr. Sandall's conclusion that the West should not intervene at all. On television, the History Channel has documented several successful mercenary operations in African countries that have prevented the slaughter of innocent civilians. Western governments might not want to use their own resources to finance such efforts directly, but they could look the other way if wealthy private individuals did so.

The beginning of the Arab onslaught in Sudan last spring coincided with the 60th anniversary of the deportation and eventual slaughter of hundreds of thousands of Hungarian Jews. In 1944, the Western press reported on the death trains that were moving toward Auschwitz. While the Allies were powerless to prevent most of the Holocaust, by the summer of 1944, when they had control of the air, they could arguably have bombed Auschwitz or the railroad tracks leading to it. But nothing was done. Sixty years later, we are faced with the same paralysis of will; what will the generation of 2064 be told about Darfur?

JOHN C. ZIMMERMAN
University of Nevada
Las Vegas, Nevada

ROGER SANDALL writes:

The January 2005 peace agreement between the southern rebels and the government of Sudan is encouraging. Some autonomy has now been granted, *shari'a* law will not be mandatory, English will be the official administrative language, and a referendum on the possible secession of the south will take place in six years' time. As I suspect Jok Maduk Jok would be the first to agree, however, it remains to be seen how far the regime will allow any of this to be implemented.

Regarding John C. Zimmerman's call for intervention, it seems to me there are important differences between the situation in Germany in 1944 and that of Sudan in 2005. Most of Hitler's victims were brought together in fixed locations for their destruction. By contrast, the victims in the vast expanses of Sudan are dispersed in thousands of rural villages and towns where the slaughter is unpredictable, where something resembling civil war exists among mobile guerrilla forces, and where territorial boundaries are not always clear. I fear that in Sudan, a country as large as Western Europe, foreign soldiers ignorant of both the land and the people would mainly become victims themselves.

No one who understands the sufferings of non-Arab Sudanese can be indifferent to Mr. Zimmerman's argument. But I strongly believe that while all necessary humanitarian aid must be rendered from the outside, the political solution should be a regional responsibility. As Mr. Jok says, the task of saving Sudan as an independent state "can only be accomplished by the Sudanese themselves." However fragile it may prove, and however uncertain the outcome, the peace agreement recently signed in Nairobi indicates the appropriate way forward.

Liebling

TO THE EDITOR:

Having enjoyed Joseph Epstein's writing so much in the past, I am pained to find myself at odds with his estimate of A. J. Liebling's current value ["Around the Block with A.J. Liebling," December 2004]. The sheer pleasure I get from reading Liebling's books (I own them all) has not diminished over time, and I get many thanks from younger friends for introducing them to the joys of *Back Where I Came From* and especially *The Earl of Louisiana*.

Liebling's enduring value can also be gauged in passages like the chapter in *The Road Back to Paris* that recounts the experience of the Algerian Jewish community during World War II. After bravely assisting the Allied invasion of Oran, Algerian Jews were later badly mistreated by the Vichy administration that was kept in place by the Allies' occupation authorities. Liebling's chilling account of this betrayal foreshadows many of the troubles besetting the Jews of France and elsewhere today.

Perhaps Mr. Epstein, like other Chicagoans I used to meet, resents Liebling's great little book, *The Second City*. Whether they were Irish from the Southside or Jews from Rogers Park, they all acted as though he had taken pictures of them *in flagrante delicto* and was showing them to the world.

MORTON WEINTRAUB
Larchmont, New York

JOSEPH EPSTEIN writes:

I do not for a moment wish to rob Morton Weintraub, or any other reader, of the pleasure he derives from reading A.J. Liebling. I would, though, like to assure him that resentment about Liebling's book on Chicago was not lurking behind my criticism. That book contains some funny bits, but its attack on the foibles of the second city is, for my shekels, nowhere near thorough enough. If he were to reread it today, I think Mr. Weintraub would find the book deader than John Dillinger and quite as deservedly.

Iraq

TO THE EDITOR:

Anyone buying into Gabriel Schoenfeld's over-

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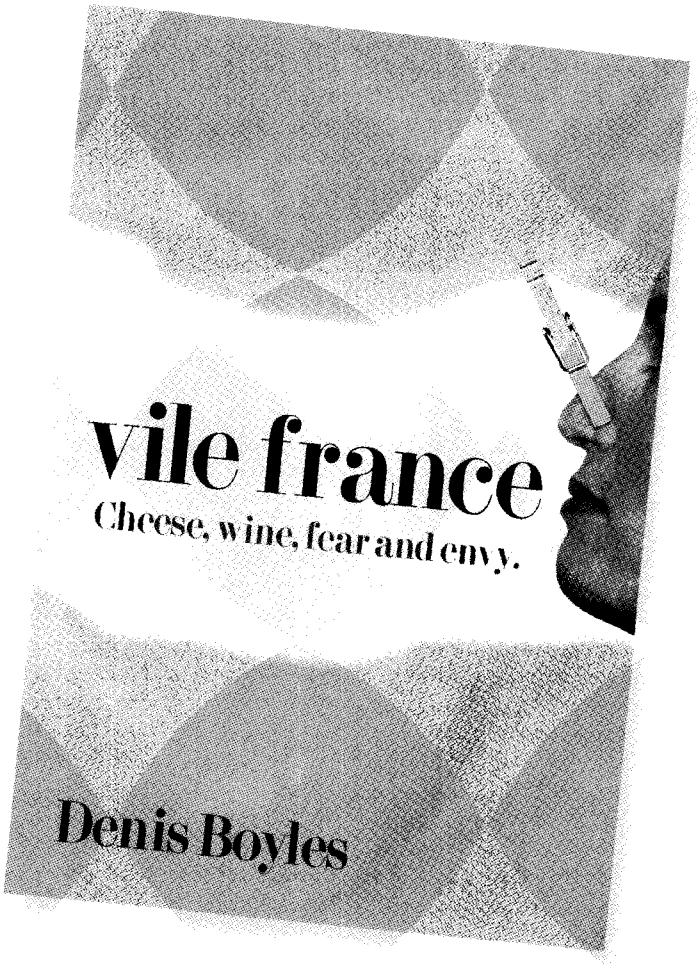
FRANCOPHOBIA



As Denis Boyles writes in the introduction to *Vile France: Cheese, Wine, Fear and Envy*: "What we mistakenly see as a craven, anti-Semitic, hypocritical, hysterically anti-American, selfish, overtaxed, culturally exhausted country bereft of ideas, fearful of its own capitulation to fundamentalist Islam, headed for a demographic cul de sac, corrupted by lame ideologies, crippled by a spirit-stomping social elite, and up to its neck in a cheesy soufflé of multi-layered bureaucracy, is actually worse than all that. It's vile."

In this bitingly funny and insightful polemic, Boyles, who has lived and worked in France, examines the internal crises — a falling birthrate, an expanding Muslim minority, economic stagnation, a lessening of international prestige — that have transformed "La Belle France" into a nation afflicted with status anxiety. He explains how a country that endlessly repeats its credentials as America's oldest ally has become one of our most committed enemies, constantly working against the interests of an America that it fears and envies.

Vile France is a work that will gratify Francophobes everywhere and cause even the most committed defender of the Jacques Chiriac worldview to crack an occasional smile.

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reaching analogy between the state of American armed forces at the end of World War II and the woeful condition in which we now find ourselves in Iraq is going to be badly misled ["Iraq: Prophets of Defeat," December 2004]. Mr. Schoenfeld argues that the military failures of Iraq—too few troops, too little good intelligence, Tolstoyish generals—duplicate those of the Allies in the European theater toward the end of World War II. Therefore, he concludes, we should not be so hard on the current establishment for failing to make good on the twin goals of victory and democracy.

But by the fall of 1944 the U.S. was fully engaged on two major fronts, the Pacific and post-liberation France. Some 12,000,000 people (including myself) were under American arms. This was a massive citizen army, which had largely been drafted.

In Iraq today, by contrast, we have an all-volunteer army, and Republicans have made it clear that there will be no draft while we try to win on the cheap.

HAROLD TICKTIN
Shaker Heights, Ohio

TO THE EDITOR:

I admire how honestly and precisely Gabriel Schoenfeld portrays the argument of the critics of our Iraq policy. But his counterargument seems based on an inadequate analogy. In 1944 in Europe we may have made terrible mistakes of judgment and there may have been a loss of morale, but we were not fighting the French whose land we were occupying/liberating. We faced an army, not a people. In Iraq we face attacks by the people we are trying to help. And not one group but many. I feel much less hopeful than Gabriel Schoenfeld of creating a "postwar" Iraq like the postwar Europe of the late 1940's.

JOHN J. CLAYTON
Amherst, Massachusetts

GABRIEL SCHOENFELD writes:

It is easier than shooting fish in a barrel to point out the many differences between the U.S. role in conquering Nazi Germany and the U.S. role in pacifying post-Saddam Iraq. Although my two interlocutors seem to have skipped over this, I did some fish-in-the-barrel shooting myself when I noted in my article that "juxtaposing the two conflicts might appear to be a stretch" and pointed to some of the more obvious difficulties with the historical parallel: "[I]n Iraq we are now engaged in a clean-up operation against terrorists and insurgents, not attempting to subdue a major power like Nazi Germany."

But I also suggested that, for this very reason, the parallel should "not be lightly dismissed." In the last stages of World War II, "the U.S. was in its military prime, battle-hardened, united at home as never before, and fighting a war that might justly be called a supreme national emergency. And if things nevertheless went badly awry in the endgame of the 'good war' fought by the 'greatest generation,' might that not suggest the folly of entering summary judgments concerning the more ambiguous conflict in which we are now engaged?"

Harold Ticktin believes that, in contrast to World War II, we are fighting this war "on the cheap." In relative terms, he is of course right, but he is wrong to blame this on the evil "Republicans." For better or worse, "on the cheap" is typically how democracies prefer to fight wars, unless they are forced by events into total mobilization.

For his part, John J. Clayton writes that in Germany, "[w]e faced an army, not a people. In Iraq we face attacks by the people we are trying to help." But this assertion rests on a serious misreading of both wars. There were plenty of German civilians who in Hitler's name fought alongside the Wehrmacht to the bitter end. In Iraq, on the other hand, it is misleading and morally tenuous to say that we "face attacks by the people we are trying to help." We face attacks by a relatively small segment of the population that has been hell-bent on stopping Iraq from establishing democratic rule. The deeds of those included in this segment—suicide bombings and hostage-taking and brutal murders—speak for themselves. So do their leaflets. One recent one, distributed on the eve of Iraq's election, read as follows: "To those of you who think you can vote and then run away, we will shadow you and catch you, and we will cut off your heads and the heads of your children."

It is those Iraqis who, in the face of such threats, summoned the courage to vote in Iraq's historic democratic election that America is trying to help. Or at least some Americans are trying to help them. As Mr. Clayton surely knows, many others would have preferred the easier course of leaving the Iraqis to their fate.

Post-Pavarotti

TO THE EDITOR:

Terry Teachout's article on Luciano Pavarotti confirms my own disdain for a singer whose career has played a key role in the decline of musical expression ["After Pavarotti," December 2004]. I have done my best to shut out Pavarotti from my listening, and Mr. Teachout's description of his "pointed" (read "pointy") tone and "uncomplicated" (read "uncultivated") musicality reminds me why.

In performances by Pavarotti or the "Three Tenors," virtuosity replaced the soul of music; subtlety was confused with adjusting dials in recording labs to produce louder and softer sounds; and microphones were placed so close to the mouths of singers that the effort of making the sound could be heard clearly. Thanks to the likes of Pavarotti and his handlers, genuine intimacy in music was confused with a kind of aural pornography. True, they also caused more classical music to be heard by the public, but with little expression beneath the surface.

Today we enjoy a proliferation of great historical performances available on recording, but there is a lack of great contemporary performances—and with that a loss of faith in music's powers of expression. I am glad these recordings exist to carry forward the possibility of musical revitalization in a post-Pavarotti age.

LARRY W. JOSEFOVITZ
Beachwood, Ohio

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Those "Palestinian Refugees"

Who are they, what is the real story?

The major and perhaps only sticking point in negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians is that of the "return of the Palestinian refugees." It sank the Camp David conference that President Clinton had arranged, even though Mr. Barak had made unprecedented concessions for the sake of peace. The new man, Mahmoud Abbas, who routinely refers to Israel as the "Zionist enemy," also insists that the "right of return" is not negotiable, and that there can be no peace unless those "refugees" are allowed to "return" to Israel.

What are the facts?

650,000 "refugees" swell to 5 million. You have heard about those "Palestinian refugees," who claim "right of return" to Israel. Of course, virtually none of them ever lived in Israel -- they are the children and mostly grandchildren of those who fled in 1948. The total number of those who fled in 1948 is estimated to have been about 650,000. Now the number who wish to return has swollen to almost five million!

How did this exodus come about? In 1948, on the day of the proclamation of the State of Israel, five Arab armies invaded the new country from all sides. In frightful radio broadcasts, they urged the Arabs living there to leave, so that the invading armies could operate without interference. They could return after the expected quick victory in that "holy war," get their property back — and that of the Jews. Things turned out differently. The invading armies were defeated. Those who had left became refugees — people without a country. Those who stayed, and their children, are full-fledged citizens of the State of Israel.

> "The Arabs are committed not to allow any 'non-believers' to be in control of any part of the Middle East. That is the real cause of the 'Palestinian refugee problem.'"

These so-called "Palestinian refugees" have not been allowed to settle in the "indivisible Arab nation." They have been supported in camps since 1948. So far, over $2.0 billion has been spent on their maintenance. No end is in sight. Who pays for that? You guessed it: Through UNWRA Relief, the United States contributes more than 60% of the total cost.

The Arab countries, among them some of the richest in the world, who fritter away their enormous fortunes on frivolous luxuries, are satisfied to leave their Arab brethren in those miserable camps. They have never contributed a penny to their maintenance.

Another side of the "refugee" story. But there is another side to the "refugee" story. Little is heard of the 800,000 Jewish refugees from Arab countries, who fled those countries to settle in the newly formed Jewish State of Israel. Every one of these refugees was immediately accepted, resettled, taken care of, and given full citizenship by the fledgling, impoverished, and embattled Jewish State. There never has been, and there certainly is not now, a Jewish "refugee" camp in Israel or anywhere else.

The Arab "refugees" who fled Israel left little wealth and little history, since most of them had not come to "Palestine" until Jewish settlers opened economic opportunities in what had been a desolate country for centuries. But the Jews of Arab lands have a history going back thousands of years. When forced to flee, they left behind land, wealth, and a long history. They arrived in Israel, quite literally only "with their shirts on their backs." They now make up almost 60% of the vibrant and productive population of Israel. What have the Arabs, the richest people in the world, done with *their* "refugees" in more than 50 years? They have kept them in misery, on the dole of the world, and have taught their hopeless youth the "skills" of suicide missions and of slaughtering defenseless and unarmed men, women, and children.

If the Arab nations truly decided to make peace with Israel and to put an end to the century-long strife, they could easily accomplish it by accepting the "Palestinian refugees" in their countries and, just as Israel did with Jewish refugees from Arab countries, integrating them into their societies and making useful citizens of them. In fact, acceptance in their countries might also be offered to the Israeli Arabs, who, despite enjoying a higher standard of living, education, and health than Arabs in any of the surrounding countries and despite having the same civil rights as Israeli Jews, are not happy to live in a Jewish state.

Population transfers are common, especially in the wake of wars. They have been practiced throughout history. In 1923, Greece and Turkey agreed to the resettlement of 2 million Greeks and 800,000 Turks; in 1945, the resettlement of 3 million Germans from Poland and Czechoslovakia was arranged. Following the collapse of its North African Empire, France accepted close to 1.5 million people. More than 12 million(!) Muslims and Hindus were exchanged between India and Pakistan. Israel has recognized this historical necessity. The "Arab Nation," with its enormous wealth and vast under-populated lands, has stubbornly refused to face facts.

It is clear that the "Palestinian refugee problem" is a red herring, kept alive by the Arab nations for their political purposes, and with cynical disregard for the great number of impoverished people who live in these camps. It is being kept alive and is being used as a "non-negotiable" bargaining chip, for the purpose of destroying the State of Israel — a feat that the Arabs have attempted several times by military means, but which has always ended in disastrous failure. Apart from the unsolvable social problems it would create, the introduction of, say, even one-half of the 5 million who claim to be "refugees" would, with one stroke, dramatically alter the demographic makeup of the country and would inevitably destroy the Jewish State. That is of course the whole idea behind the demand for the "return of the refugees". If the Arab nations were willing to solve the "refugee problem," the legitimacy of Israel could no longer be questioned. But that is not acceptable to the Arabs. They are firmly committed not to allow Israel or any "non-believers" to be in control of any part of the Middle East. It is that, and that alone, which is the real cause of the "Palestinian refugee problem."

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Down at Duke

TO THE EDITOR:

Eric Adler and Jack Langer's "The Intifada Comes to Duke" [January] is replete with misrepresentations and errors of omission. They present a distorted picture of Duke University's decision to allow its students to host the annual conference of the Palestine Solidarity Movement (PSM) this past fall, as other leading universities—the University of California, the University of Michigan, and Ohio State University—have done in previous years. The authors consistently misrepresent the positions of Richard Brodhead, the president of Duke, as well as the conference proceedings. They virtually ignore the numerous pro-Israel programs that have occurred here and repeatedly attribute statements and positions to people who neither attended the student conference nor have anything to do with Duke.

The authors' description of events is so narrow and misleading as to alter fundamentally the truth of what occurred at Duke, where a venue was provided for both Israelis and Palestinians to make their case about their longstanding conflict.

The article begins by citing previous views attributed by the authors to five extremist supporters of the Palestinian cause, four of whom did not attend the Duke student conference. The authors express befuddlement about why one of these extremists, Charles Carlson, did not speak at the gathering. The answer is simple. The student sponsors told me his views were so extreme and opposed to their own that they chose not to provide him with a forum. One of the other extremists cited has no relationship to Duke and is in prison, as the authors surely know.

Messrs. Adler and Langer postulate that the International Solidarity Movement (ISM)—a group with acknowledged ties to some extremist Palestinian groups—and the Palestine Solidarity Movement are one and the same. Duke was explicitly told by federal law-enforcement officials that this is not the case, and that the Palestine Solidarity Movement is a loose confederation of student groups at campuses across the country with no ties to known terrorists.

Messrs. Adler and Langer state that President Brodhead endorsed the conference. That is not true. He and other university officials repeatedly said that the university's decision to support its students in holding a conference was based on the principle of free speech, and was not an endorsement of the views of its sponsors. President Brodhead also said repeatedly that free speech and expression are important values to support since it is through dialogue and the free exchange of ideas, rather than suppression of speech, that the campus community can be educated on controversial issues. He publicly stated that while it is a foundational principle of American life that all ideas should have an equal opportunity to be expressed, he did not see all ideas as equal, and the university is not obligated to be a venue for all expression. Each situation needs to be evaluated, as this one was.

Readers of COMMENTARY deserve a more complete view of the events of last October and the degree to which the university, and particularly Duke students, turned what could have been merely a controversial event into an opportunity for genuine education, consistent with President Brodhead's urging. In fact, far from the one-sided picture presented in COMMENTARY, our students had an opportunity to hear a rich array of perspectives on the Middle East conflict. A few days before the conference, a bus exploded by a suicide bomber in Jerusalem last January, killing 11 innocent civilians, was displayed by supporters of Israel on our main quad in front of Duke Chapel. It provided a powerful reminder of the horrors of terrorism and the *intifada*. On the following evening, Daniel Pipes, an aggressive advocate for Israel who is familiar to readers of COMMENTARY, spoke under the sponsorship of the Freeman Center for Jewish Life and the Duke Conservative Union. That night, in a program broadcast over the Internet across the globe, some 30 Duke student groups sponsored a rally and concert against terrorism in which President Brodhead, our local congressman, and the mayor of Durham condemned terrorism and the killing of innocent civilians.

During the weekend of the PSM conference, Duke's Jewish students and the Freeman Center sponsored an address by Avraham Burg, the former speaker of Israel's parliament, as well as a panel discussion reflecting a diverse range of views by representatives, including rabbis, of different Jewish traditions. Burg emphasized in his remarks that the worst thing that could happen to Israel would be to have American Jewry hold a single view of issues affecting Palestinians and Israelis. The discussions at our campus clearly reflected that diversity of opinion.

Despite some of the claims made about prior conferences at other campuses, the PSM conference at Duke was peaceful and was not characterized by hate speech, nor was an endorsement of a one-state solution required as a condition of attendance. The only condition imposed by Duke students was a code of civility and mutual respect. All conference events were open to the first 500 registrants, including many supporters of Israel and large numbers of individuals who identified themselves as Jewish. Indeed, Eric Adler was among the first names on the list, and he and others had unfettered access to the proceedings. The vast majority of these were open to the media—including the session he and Mr. Langer inaccurately report was snuck onto the agenda at the last minute. As President Brodhead has publicly stated, the PSM has appropriately been criticized for advocating nonviolence while also saying it should not tell Palestinians what tactics to use, including violence.

Messrs. Adler and Langer refer to two of the 33 workshops/symposia where more radical views were expressed. They neglect to mention another symposium, led by an officer of Amnesty International who castigated the PSM for refusing to denounce violence against civilians as a violation of international law. Duke students led the effort to get the PSM conferees to support this position, which failed by only a few votes.

Similarly, Messrs. Adler

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and Langer assert that an opinion article written by a Duke student for the campus student newspaper after the conference led to an "intense anti-Semitic outpouring" on the paper's on-line discussion boards. They give excerpts from four disgusting messages there as representative samples; none of them was written by anyone at Duke. If one actually reads the discussion boards, one finds a discussion overwhelmingly critical of the student article, which President Brodhead denounced as displaying "a form of stereotypic thinking deplorable under any circumstances, and completely inappropriate to this community"—a statement Messrs. Adler and Langer conveniently managed to overlook.

The assertions by Messrs. Adler and Langer notwithstanding, President Brodhead has repeatedly condemned terrorism and violence as the antithesis of reason. He has declared his abhorrence of prejudice and the disindividuating, dehumanizing logic by which it works. He has emphasized that anti-Semitism has no place at Duke and will not be tolerated, and that the university's allowing a group of its students to sponsor an event does not imply institutional endorsement of their views. President Brodhead has also rejected unequivocally any calls for Duke to divest itself of investment holdings in Israel.

Messrs. Adler and Langer attack President Brodhead for what they allege is a shift in the basis of his support of the students in holding the conference (from the principle of free speech to education through dialogue); this is simply not the case. As he said in his recent welcoming address to freshmen:

> We have to hope that the world of equal rights and mutual respect will not be a world of self-neutralized convictions and watered-down consensus. Imperfect though it may still be, the new world the civil-rights movement created would not have come into existence without hot convictions and sharp elbows. But it requires work to get this balance right. Something I would love to see Duke pioneer—and for this to happen it will have to be our common creation—is a culture of positive intellectual difference or what the poet Blake called mental strife. American universities have taken far more trouble to host athletic contests than most sorts of intellectual contention. But since powerful differences shape the force-field of our lives, the sides had better learn something about each other and, dare one hope it, learn something from each other.

That is what free speech and dialogue and education are about, and that is what happened at Duke.

JOHN F. BURNESS
Senior Vice President for Public Affairs and Government Relations
Duke University
Durham, North Carolina

TO THE EDITOR:

Though pretending to be a report on the conference held at Duke this past October (at which I was a speaker), Eric Adler and Jack Langer's article is an opinion essay containing the maximum amount of false rhetoric that can be compressed into 2,000 words. I will address only some of its distortions.

Why Can't You Find This Photo at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum?

Haj Amin al Husseini, Mufti of Jerusalem, with Hitler in November 1941, pledging Arab support in return for a pledge to annihilate the Jews of Palestine.

Because the Museum Ignores the Arabs' Role in the Holocaust Just as It Ignores Current Arab Anti-Semitism

- The Museum is silent about the Arab riots of 1936-1939 —orchestrated by the Mufti of Jerusalem with Hitler's funds to close Palestine as a refuge for Jews, which enabled the Final Solution.
- The Museum is silent about the 20,000 Nazi Muslim troops the Mufti raised in Europe to kill Jews, and his major role in blocking escape by the Jews of the Balkans and Hungary.
- The Museum is silent about the Mufti's role in the Final Solution."It has been proved to us that the Mufti, too, aimed at the implementation of the final solution, viz. the extermination of European Jewry."
  —Judgment, part 50, Trial of Adolf Eichmann
- Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust Museum, is not silent. *The Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* devotes more space to the Mufti of Jerusalem than to any Nazi leader except Hitler.
- The Mufti's anti-Semitism is echoed today by Arab religious leaders: "Jews must be killed and butchered. Everywhere you meet Jews, kill them. It is forbidden to have mercy on a Jew."
  —Dr. Ahmad Abu Halabuya, Sharia Rulings Council, on Palestinian TV, October 13, 2000.

Ask the Museum to End its Silence on Arab Anti-Semitism

Write or call:

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Board Chairman
202-488-0400 ext.489
fzeidman@ushmm.org

Sara Bloomfield
Executive Director
202-488-0400 ext.415

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Holocaust Museum Watch
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Messrs. Adler and Langer dismiss the notion that Israel is a human-rights abuser. But every human-rights organization that has looked into the actions of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in the Palestinian territories has concluded that it targets civilians. Even the Israeli group B'Tselem stated that

> since the beginning of the *intifada*, IDF soldiers have killed at least 1,656 Palestinians who took no part in the fighting. Of those, 529 were children. Many of these deaths result from changes in the rules of engagement, which now allow soldiers to open fire on Palestinians in a variety of non-combat situations, even when the soldiers are not in danger.

Messrs. Adler and Langer also dismiss the comparison between Israel and South Africa under apartheid, but Israel's laws—it has no constitution or bill of rights—show the similarity. All Jews are considered nationals of Israel and can automatically become citizens and get government support, including housing on land confiscated from Palestinians. By contrast, native Palestinian Christians and Muslims, simply because they are not Jewish, may not return to their homes in Israel. A recently enacted law denies residency rights to Palestinians who marry Israelis. Three-hundred-thousand of the 1.2 million Palestinians with nominal Israeli citizenship are considered by law as "present-absentees," and their land has been taken. Over 530 Palestinian villages and towns have thus been ethnically cleansed and wiped off the face of the earth. Nearly 100 villages are "unrecognized" and are slated for removal.

Amnesty International and other human-rights groups regularly issue statements about the racism inherent in Israel's laws. All of this, as I said in my talk at the Duke conference, reflects a "diseased" ideology of ethnocentric nationalism and racism that we are familiar with from South African apartheid and European fascism.

Most egregious is Messrs. Adler and Langer's defamation of an American hero in writing that "activist Rachel Corrie . . . was accidentally killed in 2003 while attempting to block Israeli bulldozers from uncovering terrorist smuggling tunnels in Gaza." But eyewitnesses reported that the driver of the armored bulldozer intentionally ran over Corrie, who was wearing an orange vest and gesturing visibly. The house she was trying to defend by such nonviolent means belonged to a pharmacist who, to this day, has not been accused of anything. His house, under which there are no tunnels, is still standing.

Using blatant lies to blame the victim is a common tactic of those who oppress and destroy. Shame. Since the U.S. government gives billions of our tax dollars to fund this charade, the least we can do is urge divestment from Israel and boycotts.

MAZIN QUMSIYEH
Yale University
New Haven, Connecticut

TO THE EDITOR:

Eric Adler and Jack Langer are troubled that a recent conference of the Palestinian Solidarity Movement (PSM) was held at Duke. But the reason the PSM holds conferences on college campuses is plain: the Palestinian people are victims of a historic tragedy propagated by Israel and made possible by the vast, uncritical support Israel gets from the United States. The nature of the tragedy, its causes and history, are rarely discussed fully or truthfully in the American media. Where better to host a conference on the subject than the college campus, where free thought is promoted?

On campuses where PSM conferences are held, local Jewish organizations try to drown out the events with false charges of anti-Semitism and (of course) "terrorism." They are willing to sacrifice freedom of speech and the integrity of the universities to ensure that the Palestinian position remains unheard.

The mainstream Jewish community, with its large network of Hillels, is well represented on American campuses. And relative to their numbers in the population, Jews are overrepresented in university faculties, student bodies, and alumni contributions. Their greater power and their vigorous attacks on the Palestinian side replicate the situation in Israel/Palestine. The conferences are necessary and important, and should be welcomed on every campus.

MIRIAM M. REIK
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

As a 1969 graduate of Duke University, I thank you for Eric Adler and Jack Langer's article.

In the fall of 2004, Duke's president Richard Brodhead sent a four-page letter to alumni, half of which he devoted to explaining why he was allowing the Palestinian Solidarity Movement conference to be held on campus. Dated September 28, the letter was clearly an attempt at damage control after the public outcry against Duke's hosting this disgusting group.

Brodhead's letter contains a discourse on "free speech" sandwiched between a chatty report on the record high applicant pool, the departure of members of the "Duke team," the generosity of the alumni, and the fortunes of the men's soccer, women's field hockey, women's volleyball, and women's cross-country teams. The transition from the trivial to the serious demonstrates Brodhead's effort to minimize the hateful, blatantly anti-Semitic display that was coming to Duke:

> My new presidency has faced a number of early challenges, from the Los Angeles Lakers' efforts to seduce Coach K to the university's decision to permit a Duke student group, Hiwar, to host the Fourth National Student Conference of the Palestine Solidarity Movement on campus on October 15-17.

After the conference I called Brodhead's office to ask what he planned to do now that he had allowed the monster of anti-Semitism to rear its head on the campus of Duke University. My call was not returned, nor was my letter to the Board of Trustees. I am ashamed of the spinelessness of Duke's leadership.

EDYTHE GOLDSTEIN VICTOR
Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania

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TO THE EDITOR:

Eric Adler and Jack Langer are owed a huge debt of gratitude for unmasking the pseudo-academic pretenses offered by Duke administrators for allowing the Palestine Solidarity Movement's (PSM) terror conference to be held on their campus.

The notion that Duke was trying to uphold the "importance of the principle of free expression" and foster "education through dialogue" is Orwellian. As Messrs. Adler and Langer point out, the conference's organizers prohibited the presence of reporters and recording devices at their sessions. And an attempt by Jewish groups on campus to initiate a dialogue was rejected out of hand.

President Richard Brodhead and the university's vice president for public affairs, John Burness, were undoubtedly aware of the lineup of terror apologists heading the "workshops" at the PSM conference. By allowing the conference to take place under the well-worn guise of freedom of expression, they effectively sanctioned the vilification of Jews. People of conscience should salute Messrs. Adler and Langer's courage in exposing this sham.

ADINA KUTNICKI
Ridgewood, New Jersey

ERIC ADLER and JACK LANGER write:

The typical course of a scandal is for a blunder to be followed by a cover-up. As the letter from John F. Burness attests, this certainly seems to be the case at Duke. Having provoked a hailstorm of criticism for inviting anti-Semites and advocates of terrorism to its campus, the university administration is now seeking shelter in evasions, prevarications, and worse.

Let us examine Mr. Burness's claims. He asserts, first, that of the "five extremist supporters of the Palestinian cause" we linked to the Duke conference, four did not attend. If he had troubled to consult the PSM's published agenda of the conference, he would have found that two of the five figures we named, Abe Greenhouse and Fadi Kiblawi, did in fact participate. That the other three did not is in any case irrelevant. Our explicitly stated point in naming them was simply to demonstrate the PSM's well-documented history of extremism and anti-Semitism. That history is a subject that Mr. Burness, significantly, chooses not to discuss.

According to Mr. Burness, we were wrong to express "befuddlement" over the cancellation of a conference workshop by Charles Carlson. After all, he explains, the PSM disavows extremists like Carlson, and the student sponsors allegedly rejected him for that reason. If we were not befuddled before, we certainly are now. If Charles Carlson was too extreme for the conference, what does that say about participants like Kiblawi (who has expressed his desire to be a suicide bomber), or Mazin Qumsiyeh (who refers to Zionism as a "disease"), or Bob Brown (who calls the Six-Day war the "Jew war of '67")? Are these three, who did speak at the conference, *not* "too extreme"? Mr. Burness declines to say.

Did we "postulate," as Mr. Burness charges, "that the International Solidarity Movement (ISM) . . . and

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the Palestine Solidarity Movement are one and the same"? We never postulated anything of the kind. What we did demonstrate—not postulate—is that the ISM, according to the words of one of its founders, openly cooperates with terrorist organizations, including Hamas. We also demonstrated that two panels at the Duke conference were led by ISM militants. One of these panels was a recruitment session aimed at inducing attendees to travel to Israel, there to court harm or even death, with attendant propaganda benefits in the service of the anti-Israel cause. The entirety of Mr. Burness's reply to this is to deny that the panel was scheduled at the last minute. Refuting things we never said, Mr. Burness chooses to ignore the truly outrageous facts we presented. A pattern is becoming evident here.

Mr. Burness also maintains that, contrary to what we wrote, President Richard Brodhead never endorsed the PSM conference. Yet Brodhead said that the conference would bring "education through dialogue" to Duke. He also spoke and still speaks of the gathering as a "constructive" event. Mr. Burness, for his part, goes so far as to say that the PSM gathering was an "opportunity for genuine education." In previous pronouncements he said of the conference that "it's a good thing we did here," and that the "overall tone of the weekend was one of discussion and learning." Such laudatory characterizations are, in fact, endorsements, serving to drape a mantle of academic respectability over an organization riddled with anti-Semites and proponents of violence.

It is noteworthy, on this point, that the PSM does not present *itself* as an organization dedicated to fostering education and "dialogue." Rather, as its own website makes plain, its primary mission is the elaboration of tactics and strategies to delegitimize the state of Israel. Bob Brown, in his presentation at the conference, sneered at the very notion of dialogue: "I wasn't invited here to take part in a dialogue. I was invited here to help start a nationwide divestment movement, and anything else would be a waste of time." If the PSM's purpose is "dialogue," some of its own members have yet to be informed.

Still another claim by Mr. Burness is that our article was "one-sided" because it failed to discuss the pro-Israel events that occurred on campus during the PSM conference; he cites the presence of Avraham Burg and Daniel Pipes and the display of a bombed-out bus. But a speech by Burg or Pipes, or a display of terrorist handiwork, in no way diminishes the magnitude of the bigotry exhibited by the PSM. Nor does it contribute to what Mr. Burness preposterously calls a "rich array of perspectives on the Middle East conflict," as if terrorism and anti-Semitism were just "perspectives" like any others.

But this gets to the heart of the matter: what actually was said, and advocated, at the PSM conference. Ignoring the many examples of bigotry and incitement documented in our article, Mr. Burness instead points to a single workshop in which extremism and anti-Semitism were not evident. The argument that the PSM conference was constructive because *one* of its workshops was not anti-Semitic is so weak as to refute itself.

At one juncture, Mr. Burness reminds us that President Brodhead, an advocate of free speech, nevertheless does "not see all ideas as equal," and believes that "the university is not obligated to be a venue for all expression." This is a sentiment with which we certainly agree. But the statement leaves us wondering; if an organization with a documented history of anti-Semitism and incitement to violence can be granted a venue at Duke, what kinds of "expression" would be denied? Silence once again, alas.

Concluding his letter, Mr. Burness cites President Brodhead's remarks that anti-Semitism will not be tolerated at Duke. Unfortunately, tolerating anti-Semitism is exactly what the Duke administration has already done. As we noted in our article, the real issue in this controversy is the refusal of the Duke administration to call anti-Semitism and incitement to the murder of innocents by their proper names, even when staring them in the face. That refusal continues. To the "cowardice and complicity" with which we charged the administration in our article, we can now add the charge of engaging in a cover-up, and a clumsy cover-up at that.

Declining to address *any* aspect of our account of the PSM conference, Mazin Qumsiyeh simply rehashes a litany of pro-Palestinian talking points. In the course of doing so, he asserts that we "dismiss" comparisons of Israel with South Africa under apartheid, as well as the notion that Israel is a "human-rights abuser." We never dismissed either of these claims; we did not assess them at all. Such false and vicious comparisons have been effectively put to rest in numerous articles in COMMENTARY and elsewhere.

What we did note was that at the PSM conference where Mr. Qumsiyeh was a keynote speaker, Israel was characterized, absurdly and poisonously, as the "greatest abuser of human rights" in the world. Mr. Qumsiyeh's letter provides yet more evidence, if more were needed, that the PSM is more interested in disseminating propaganda than it is in engaging in genuine discussion.

Similarly, Miriam M. Reik takes us to task for allegedly suggesting that pro-Palestinian conferences should not be held at universities. Again, we made no such argument. What we did was to criticize Duke for hosting one particular conference—that of the Palestine Solidarity Movement—and we presented reasons why it deserves to be criticized. We would welcome any conference devoted to the Palestinian issue that did not exhibit the kind of extremism and anti-Semitism that marred the PSM gathering at Duke. As for Miriam M. Reik's assertion that Jews are "overrepresented" in American universities, it does not leave us with much confidence in her ability to identify the kind of bigotry that we oppose.

Finally, we thank Adina Kutnicki and Edythe Goldstein Victor for their generous comments.

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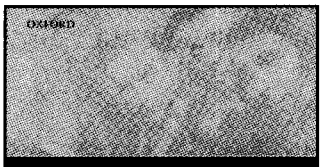

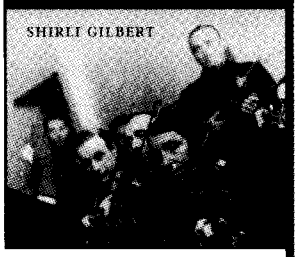

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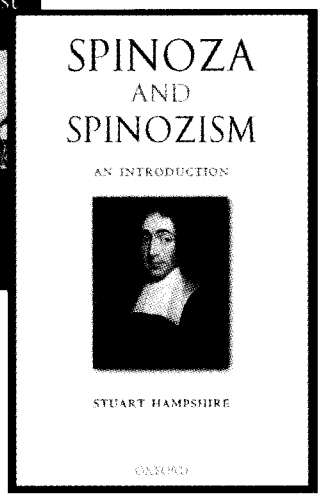

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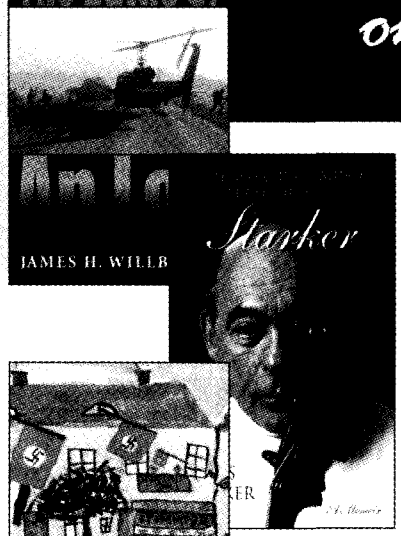

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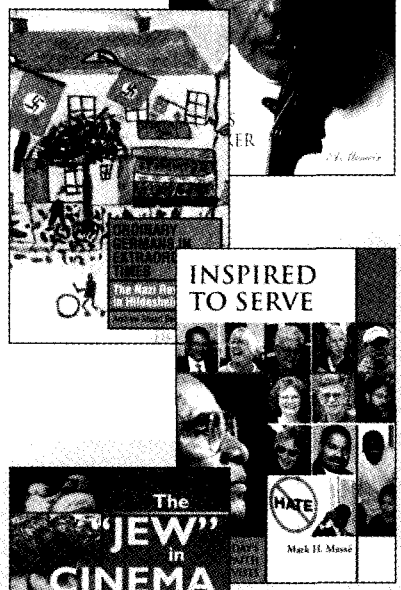

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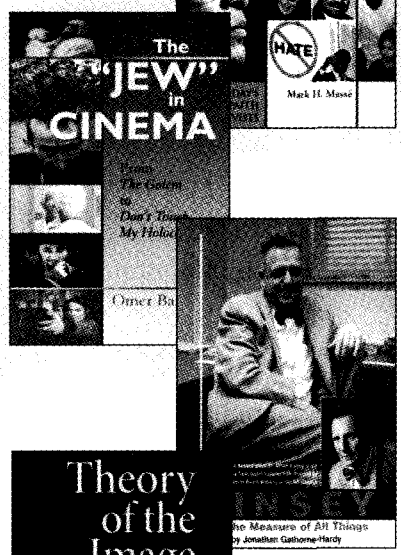

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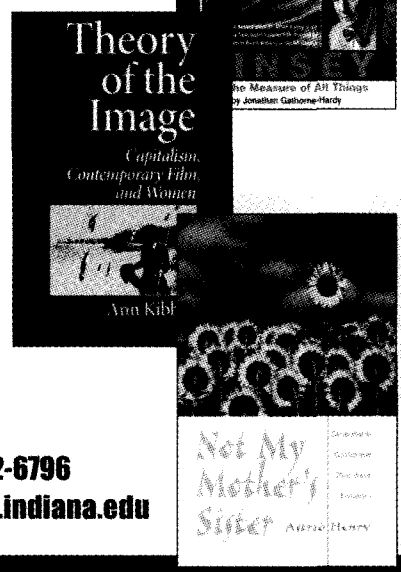

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Commentary
March 2005

Free Speech for Terrorists?

Andrew C. McCarthy

THE NEXUS in militant Islam between advocacy and actual savagery is no longer contestable. It has been the subject of too much informed analysis and, more importantly, is an empirically demonstrated fact.

Thus, speaking in Brooklyn, New York, on January 16, 1993, the fiery Islamic cleric Omar Abdel Rahman—the "blind sheik," as he was known—urged his foot soldiers never to fear being labeled terrorists:

> [We] welcome being terrorists. And we do not deny this charge to ourselves. The Qur'an makes it among the means to perform jihad for the sake of Allah, which is to terrorize the enemies of God and our enemies too. . . . Then we must be terrorists, and we must terrorize the enemies of Islam, and frighten them, and disturb them, and shake the earth under their feet.

Only six weeks later, a powerful urea-nitrate bomb would explode in the bowels of the World Trade Center. Although, miraculously, only six people were killed, the jihadists' objective had been hugely ambitious. The bomb was set to detonate at high noon—a time when as many as 130,000 employees, tourists, and everyday Americans gravitated to the teeming lower Manhattan complex—and the plotters hoped the force of the blast would collapse one tower into the other, slaughtering thousands. The device had been planted by the blind sheik's acolytes after months of planning. A key conspirator had calmly explained to a government informant the preceding year that major terrorist operations could not go forward without a purportedly religious edict of approval—a *fatwa*—from Sheik Omar.

Blind, diabetic, and beset by other maladies, Sheik Omar never fired a shot in the war against the "enemies of God." He never mixed an explosive compound, never beheaded a single infidel or apostate. As a renowned Quranic scholar, his weapon was merely words. But those words were backed by his prestige in a movement that insists on authoritative words to license deadly deeds. So it was that, upon being sentenced to life imprisonment in 1996, Sheik Omar issued a decree, declaring of Americans that "Muslims everywhere [should] dismember their nation, tear them apart, ruin their economy, provoke their corporations, destroy their embassies, attack their interests, sink their ships, . . . shoot down their planes, [and] kill them on land, at sea, and in the air. Kill them wherever you find them."

One student who heard well was the wealthy Saudi upstart Osama bin Laden, eventually the

ANDREW C. MCCARTHY, *a senior fellow at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, led the terrorism prosecution of Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman in 1995. His previous articles in* COMMENTARY *include "The End of the Right of Self-Defense?: Israel, the World Court, and the War on Terror" (November 2004) and "Torture: Thinking About the Unthinkable" (July-August 2004).*

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leader of an international terror network, al Qaeda, whose size and efficacy dwarfed even Sheik Omar's ambitious hopes. Over the next years, bin Laden would issue his own declarations against America, and follow them regularly with murderous deeds. Only days after 9/11, with fires still raging from the finally destroyed twin towers, and the murder toll rising, bin Laden jubilantly explained to the international media that his war on America was fully justified under the authority of the Islamic *fatwa* issued from prison by the blind sheik.

WITH AN enemy committed to terrorism, the advocacy of terrorism—the threats, the words—are not mere dogma, or even calls to "action." They are themselves weapons—weapons of incitement and intimidation, often as effective in achieving their ends as would be firearms and explosives brandished openly.

Nevertheless, even in 2005, and even in the midst of a war against jihadists, it has become necessary to ask whether advocacy of terrorism can be effectively regulated in the United States. Our enemies, after all, swaddle their calls to barbarism in the language of religious duty and political dissent. These lie at the very core of liberty in an enlightened and thriving democratic order. So luminous does free speech shine among our values that it is enshrined in the very first amendment to the Constitution. Early Americans had known doctrinal tyranny. The framers fully understood that if their grand experiment in republican democracy was to flourish, the exchange of ideas prerequisite to an informed citizenry was a necessity.

There is a curious marriage of minds on this point between American absolutism, which is so certain of its capacity to achieve the right ends that it proclaims speech an inviolable good, and American pragmatism, which is certain of nothing so much as its capacity to be wrong. The result is a doctrinaire humility: we go forth assuming as an immutable truth that there are no immutable truths, and therefore that expression must be uninhibited. As Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. famously put it in 1919, "the ultimate good desired is better reached by free trade in ideas—[and] the best test of truth is the power of the thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the market."

But does this self-correcting competition never end? Is everything, ultimately, relative—left forever to be weighed against everything else? Do we so lack confidence (except in the sacrosanct status of speech itself) that we are unable to say with assurance that some things are truly evil, and that advocating them not only fails to serve any socially desirable purpose but guarantees more evil? Must our historical deference to opinion, however noxious, defer as well to a call to arms against innocents, or a call to destroy a form of representative government that *protects* religious and political freedom? May we not even ban and criminalize the advocacy of militant Islam and its métier, which is the indiscriminate slaughter of civilians?

The timeliness of such questions has been brought into relief by an impressively comprehensive volume, *Perilous Times: Free Speech in Wartime*,* by the eminent constitutional scholar Geoffrey R. Stone. Written from the perspective of a committed but generally fair-minded civil libertarian, the study scrutinizes government's historical treatment of the First Amendment during national crises, bringing to the fore collisions of theory against practice.

As no one needs reminding, such collisions have abounded. The summoning imperative of the First Amendment's free-speech clause—"Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press"—is worn as a badge of honor by every American who ever insisted, "I have a right to my opinion." About it, however, all that can be stated with certainty is that it does not mean what it says. Indeed, in the 214 years since the First Amendment's ratification, Congress has made *many* laws abridging the liberty to speak and otherwise to express oneself—in some instances, tightly regulating, and even criminalizing, mere words themselves.

Some language is still adjudged so obscene that, notwithstanding today's coarse media environment, it may not be uttered on broadcast television and radio. Extensive "time, place, and manner" regulations minimize public nuisance by restricting commercial advertising. A person whose words disclose classified information is deemed to have committed a grievous felony. And under the newfangled cudgel known as campaign finance reform, speech aimed squarely at political persuasion—that is, the species of expression once regarded as the quintessential, untouchable core of the First Amendment—may now also be constrained.

For a mind as supple as Geoffrey Stone's, this makes for a terrain of unlimited possibilities. In fact, contrary to most constitutional provisions, which have inspired energetic judicial gymnastics to unmoor terms from their original understanding, the free-speech clause, Stone maintains, had no original understanding at all. Far from a con-

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crete doctrine, it was an "aspiration, to be given meaning over time," prompting Benjamin Franklin himself to quip: "few of us [have any] distinct ideas of its nature and extent."

The challenge taken up by Stone is to chart history's often precarious voyage toward this "aspiration." His chosen crucible is wartime. This is a wise decision: the First Amendment is plainly about an individual's right to buck the established order, and in wartime the stakes are highest for both sides. It is then that society most requires cohesion in order to fight effectively and preserve the system on which all liberties depend. And it is also then that the individual is most affected by government's choices and thus most needs a wide berth to criticize them. If one wants to know what free speech really is, the answer lies in how government treats it during an existential crisis.

FOR MUCH of our history, Stone relates, the answer has been: not very well. He studies six separate crises: the "half war" with France at the close of the 18th century, the Civil War, World Wars I and II, the cold war, and Vietnam. Stone's history is a thematic one, with two notions hammered at repeatedly. The first is a certain justified cynicism about government. When given an opportunity, a regnant administration is virtually certain to use its wartime powers to suppress not only insurrectionist speech for national-security purposes but mere dissent for political purposes. His second theme is an unshakable faith in the talismanic power of speech itself not simply to educate and improve but, by its own sheer force, to defeat the enemies of freedom. Although there is much in Stone's reasoning with which to disagree, the discussion is engrossing, punctuated with fascinating characters and distinguished throughout by superb writing.

Stone's first target is the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798, a mixed bag of the sensible and the uncommonly silly that marked the U.S. government's first foray into the crossroads of free expression and national security. History tends to recall these provisions as a single, deplorable package, but that is not entirely accurate.

The Alien Enemies Act, even for Stone, was arguably appropriate—in fact, it still remains the law that in times of declared war, nationals of the enemy may be detained or deported. He disapproves of the companion (and short-lived) "Alien Friends" laws, which both drastically reduced immigration and empowered the executive unilaterally to detain or deport aliens of any nationality. But, as he compellingly shows, the true ignominy attaches to the outlawing of sedition, making it a crime to "write, print, utter, or publish . . . any false, scandalous, and malicious writing" aimed at bringing government officials into disrepute. Not surprisingly, enforcement devolved into criminalization of mere dissent—and often dissent of an inconsequential kind.

Stone next turns to the Civil War, where his discussion centers less on free speech per se than on such matters as the suspension of habeas corpus, declarations of martial law, and the trying of civilians in military courts. These are all areas in which, confronted by the very real possibility of losing the Union, Abraham Lincoln acted decisively, and Stone's consideration of his actions is measured and careful: sympathetic to the exigencies Lincoln faced but critical of the license he claimed.

Stone's most significant contribution to our present inquiry is his description of the seismic shift that occurred over the course of the 20th century in the Supreme Court's rulings concerning restraints on threatening speech. Particularly germane is his explanation of the current state of the law and its rationale, of which he is an enthusiastic adherent.

The modern First Amendment began to take shape in World War I. This was a bleak era for civil liberties, stamped by unprecedented governmental excesses. Championing America's controversial entry into the war, President Woodrow Wilson undertook to rouse public opinion to his side, by, among other things, forming what was in every sense a propaganda ministry and using the criminal law to crush dissent.

The latter end was accomplished by a promiscuous piece of legislation known as the Espionage Act of 1917. As abusive as this proved to be, it was a fraction of what the administration initially sought: Wilson's proposal included a press-censorship provision that would have forbidden publications "useful to the enemy." As Stone recounts with evident relief, Congress decisively rejected this gambit despite a personal appeal from Wilson that it was "absolutely necessary to the public safety."

Still, two laws that were ultimately enacted, in dramatically scaled-back form, proved troublesome. A "nonmailability" provision enabled the Postmaster General to halt delivery of opposition press, and, most alarmingly, a "disaffection" law effectively stifled dissent under the cover of protecting military enlistments from "insubordination, disloyalty, mutiny, or refusal of duty." This was enforced by the Justice Department, with court approval, through the instrument of a "bad tenden-

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cy" test: if utterances of even veiled protest had any theoretical propensity to depress military performance, conviction was essentially assured.

STONE DOES not disclaim the need for appropriate safeguards for military operations, but he argues trenchantly that a government of the people must encourage informed debate of the important issues of the day. In the Wilson years, this principle animated the legendary Learned Hand and two other federal district judges, George Bourquin and Charles Freemont Amidon, to struggle, very much against the grain of the times, for an appropriate balance between free speech and military necessity.

Bourquin's theory called for a close connection between speech and the realistic occurrence of insubordination. This would rule out conviction based on, for example, general statements that the war was being fought for moneyed interests—i.e., statements that plainly were not aimed at depressing enlistment in the military.

Hand took a somewhat different path. Stressing the importance to democracy of debate and dissent, he asserted that words—"the triggers of action"—should not be proscribed in the absence of express advocacy to violate the law. Under this view, regardless of the overall tendency that words might have to inspire various actions—for example, a speech generally criticizing foreign policy *might* influence a draft-age listener to refrain from enlisting—a speaker who stopped short of urging specific lawless action should not be prosecuted.

These were decidedly minority viewpoints, however. By 1919, the Espionage Act prosecutions of the first "Red Scare"— including one involving the Socialist-party leader Eugene V. Debs—began reaching the Supreme Court. To Stone's chagrin, that tribunal was then "in firmly conservative hands" and not apt "to take a bold stand in favor of those who condemned capitalism and denounced the established order."

In one such case, Justice Holmes, writing for the unanimous Court, applied the sweeping "bad tendency" test to uphold an Espionage Act conviction. But then he added this statement:

> The question in every case is whether the words used are used in such circumstances and are of such a nature as to create *a clear and present danger* that they will bring about the substantive evils that Congress has a right to prevent. It is a question of *proximity and degree*. [emphasis added]

As Stone elucidates, Holmes almost certainly did not intend "clear and present danger" to be in any sense momentous. If he had, the proper course would have been to reverse the conviction and order a new trial under this new standard. Nevertheless, the invocation of "clear and present danger" was historically significant, if only because Holmes had an ego befitting his station in our legal pantheon. When he ultimately did change course, he was too proud to concede the fact (and thereby tacitly admit that his earlier opinions had been wrong). Instead, once finally persuaded of the correctness of "clear and present danger," he was able to avail himself of a phrase he had used, however vacantly, before.

The most interesting vignette in Stone's book involves this conversion of Holmes from virtual government rubber-stamp to free-speech trailblazer, with no small amount of nudging from his significantly younger friend Learned Hand. Once convinced, Holmes exhibited all the zeal of a convert. Beginning in 1919, with his blazing tribute to the power of truth "to get itself accepted in the competition of the market," Holmes and his colleague Louis Brandeis authored a series of dissents unfolding the principles of interplay between "proximity and degree." In a transformation Stone correctly regards as nothing short of amazing, these dissents gradually took on far more grandeur than the majority rulings from which they demurred. Ultimately, the Holmes/Brandeis view carried the day.

IT WOULD, however, be decades before that transformation came to pass. Stone regards this as a desultory epoch for free speech. The fall of France in 1940 begat a reenactment of the Espionage Act—meaning that the provisions would now be enforced in what technically was peacetime—and the eve of World War II also ushered in the Smith Act, one of Stone's banes. This, aside from measures requiring aliens to register and streamlining procedures for their expulsion, also proscribed criminal syndicalism, i.e., the teaching and promotion of terrorism, force, and violence for the purpose of accomplishing political or industrial change.

Postwar, these were key ingredients for the second "Red Scare," featuring such *bête noires* of Stone's as Whittaker Chambers, Elizabeth Bentley, the House Un-American Activities Committee, and, of course, Senator Joseph McCarthy. But this period, too, eventually led to a great leap forward, principally thanks to the Supreme Court's review in 1951 of *United States* v. *Dennis*.

The case involved a lengthy, high-profile prose-

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cution of several members of the American Communist party (CPUSA), a prosecution regarded by Stone as more about convincing Americans that the Truman administration was not soft on Communism than about national security. The heart of the case was criminal syndicalism.

The fact that this crime—starkly narrower than the vague offenses spawned by the Sedition and Espionage Acts—had become the terrain for fighting out the speech-versus-security battle was itself a sign of dramatic progress. Stone, though, does not see it that way, and his objections go to the heart of his theory of free speech. The premise here, adumbrated years earlier by Brandeis, was that one could sensibly segregate the "abstract" proselytizing of a doctrine calling for mass violence from the actual solicitation of such violence. Stone enthusiastically cites Justice Felix Frankfurter (a member of the *Dennis* Court), who deduced that advocacy of violence is typically "coupled" with "criticism of defects in our society." Should such advocacy forfeit one's rights at the marketplace? For Stone, as for Frankfurter, the answer is no: "sometimes the rhetoric of revolution is so deeply imbedded in the discourse of dissent" that one cannot "separate the wheat from the chaff."

That this theory did not prevail in *Dennis* (in which even Frankfurter voted to uphold the convictions) is a development Stone sees as "snatch[ing] defeat from the jaws of victory." In a hodgepodge of opinions, none of which commanded a majority, the Court applied what he calls a "discounted" clear-and-present-danger test. Much of its reasoning was lifted from a lower-court opinion by Hand, who had sensibly theorized that the First Amendment did not protect speech that was part of the "provocation to unlawful conduct," regardless of when that conduct was to occur. Turning then to the Supreme Court's clear-and-present-danger test, Hand concluded that the key question was "whether the gravity of the 'evil,' discounted by its improbability, justifies such invasion of free speech as is necessary to avoid the danger." In this case, he wrote, gravity was at its weightiest: a mortal threat against the existing order by "a highly articulated, well contrived . . . organization, numbering thousands of adherents, rigidly and ruthlessly disciplined, many of whom are infused with a passionate utopian faith that is to redeem mankind."

For Stone, the "discount" here centers on the immediacy of the threat. He does not see it. For him, the real hero of the piece is the dissenting Justice William O. Douglas, who, while acknowledging the danger of Communism abroad, regarded the movement in *this* country as a "bogeyman" that had been "thoroughly exposed" and "crippled as a political force."

Thankfully, in Stone's celebratory recounting, it was the Douglas view that would become ascendant in the late 1950's, when pivotal changes in personnel (including the appointment of Justice William J. Brennan, for whom Stone served as a law clerk in the 1970's) ushered in the extremely speech-friendly Court of Chief Justice Earl Warren. In short order, the Court would hold (in *Scales* v. *United States*) that "mere" membership in an organization advocating the violent overthrow of the U.S. government could not be prosecuted, since to do so would pose "a real danger that legitimate political expression or association might be impaired."

The free-speech tidal wave peaked in the final period studied by Stone, the era of the Vietnam war and Watergate. Court cases pressed the very limits of the speech-versus-security divide, posing the question whether the value we ascribe to dissent might even justify violations of general laws that do not target speech. Could one permissibly burn a draft card, urinate on a public building, or run naked through the streets in order to "rage against the machine"? The promise of resultant chaos was too much even for the Warren Court, and Stone agrees.

But laws targeting speech itself were another matter entirely. In this regard, the revolution hailed by Stone was completed with the landmark 1969 decision in *Brandenberg* v. *Ohio*, involving a prosecution of the Ku Klux Klan for threatening racial violence. Here, instituting "clear and present danger" in its full flower, the Court held that government could not proscribe advocacy of the use of force (or of other violations of law) "except where such advocacy is *directed* to inciting or producing *imminent* lawless action and is *likely* to incite or produce such action" (emphasis added). In the new dispensation, self-preservation would now be left mainly to the marketplace of ideas, and to the belief that most threats would deliquesce in the sunlight of reasoned debate.

And this brings us to the denouement of Stone's survey, an all-too cursory peek at the "war on terror." It is disappointingly thin, especially as measured against the author's diligent treatment of prior crises. Though he strongly suggests that the Bush administration has run roughshod over civil liberties, his assertions are conclusory and unsupported. They also conspicuously fail to convey the palpable fact—which cries out from the rest of his

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tour de force—that, by any reasonable standard, contemporary claims about deprivations of freedom pale beside the realities of the administrations of John Adams, Lincoln, Wilson, FDR, and Truman.

BUT THERE is much more to be said about the latitudinarian view held by Stone on the issue of free speech—and hardly by him alone. The first thing is that, whether or not the framers endorsed an "aspirational" First Amendment, as Stone maintains, it is certain that the free-speech clause was never intended to frustrate government's ability to suppress true threats to national security. This is a matter of balance.

The problem with aspirations is that they are not easily given to balance, being more the stuff of religious fervor than of real-world experience. Those in the thrall of their aspirations tend to see them as unadulterated, undeniable virtues, and to dismiss or disparage on-the-ground facts that besmirch their lofty vision.

In this respect, Stone is more grounded than many a civil-libertarian extremist. Except when it comes to certain not-to-be-questioned incarnations of evil—Joseph McCarthy, the Japanese internment, the Patriot Act, etc.—he is not implacably hostile to government or insensitive to the legitimate demands of national security. But he is, nonetheless, a free-speech ideologue of the aspirational bent. Borrowing language from Learned Hand, his version of the First Amendment "rests upon a 'skepticism as to all political orthodoxy' and a belief that 'there are no impregnable political absolutes'"—so that even advocacy of violence must be cut some slack lest some kernel of truth be "chilled" and thereby prevented from coming forward.

Obviously, to say that things were not always thus does not impress Stone; yet it remains the fact. For most of our nation's history, we were confident both about the existence of the universally condemnable and about our ability to discern it without meaningfully short-changing the robust exchange of information on which a functioning democracy depends. Thus, as late as the 1942 case of *Chaplinsky* v. *New Hampshire*, the Supreme Court could unanimously decree:

> There are certain well-defined and narrowly limited classes of speech, the prevention and punishment of which have never been thought to raise any constitutional problem. These include the lewd, the profane, the libelous, and the insulting or "*fighting*" *words*—those which *by their very utterance* inflict injury or *tend to incite an immediate breach of the peace*. [emphasis added]

In the latter half of the 20th century, this sense of confidence, like much else about the established American order, evaporated under the withering assault of relativism and the self-doubt that inevitably flows from self-loathing. Today, recitations like Stone's of our legacy of speech repression during times of national crisis help to buttress the new adversarial view, lending grist to its premonitory warnings. But unless one is dealing with absolutes—and even by Stone's lights, free speech is not quite an absolute—its relative value is wholly dependent on context, and accurately assessing its value hinges on accurately portraying that context.

After the fact, which is the way history gets written, a threat that has failed to materialize in its full monstrousness never appears as threatening as it may in reality have been. For the ideologue reflecting backward, the luminous virtue of free speech glows ever more incandescent, while curbs imposed to guard against a catastrophe that never happened—particularly when such curbs have resulted in individual episodes of injustice—seem increasingly sinister. The natural propensity is to overstate the importance of the aspiration and undervalue the degree of the threat. It is a propensity to which Stone repeatedly falls prey.

So, too, with the tendency to conflate subjective intentions with objective actions. The impulse to defend individual liberty is admirable, but, since individual liberty is not always society's paramount concern, admirable intentions do not mean its defense is necessarily wise. On the other hand, a necessary war may be partially motivated by selfish desires to profit politically from public good will; but the venality hardly renders the war unnecessary, or taints the measures taken to wage it. In the facile distortion of hindsight, imputed or declared intentions take on outsized significance, particularly among the studiously well-intentioned.

OF STONE'S two recurring historical themes, the first (to repeat) is that, in times of crisis, the political branches can always be relied on to mobilize themselves toward reductions in individual liberty. This is generally true, but Stone neglects the dynamic nature of the ensuing and by-now familiar cycle. At the start, the frightened public is generally supportive, but it becomes steadily less so if the anticipated harm does not come to pass. Analogously, the courts generally give the President and Congress a wide berth while the crisis endures, but typically reduce this deference, often substantially, in the aftermath.

Over the longer term, too, the cycle is far from

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static, though Stone, against the weight of overwhelming evidence, sometimes suggests otherwise. For example, in the sedition cases, judges rigged convictions by virtually compelling juries to conclude that statements of mere opinion could be actionably "false" and "malicious." Drawing corroboration from lapses he perceives in subsequent crises, Stone worries that courts cannot ever be trusted to vindicate civil liberties. But that is a strange argument to be making today, when the Supreme Court has opened the federal courts to alien enemy combatants captured overseas in wartime, vesting persons heretofore considered bereft of any constitutional protections with a right to challenge a commonsense and centuries-old law of war stating that enemy captives may be detained until the cessation of hostilities.

In truth, as Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist demonstrated in *All the Laws but One* (1998), the cycle described here is dynamic and, insofar as civil liberties are concerned, quite progressive. The courts, by nature, may come late to the game, but they do ultimately address curtailments of liberty. That this is of little consolation to those individuals whose rights were trammeled does not erase the significance of the phenomenon. Over time, courts inexorably set the bar higher and higher against government regulation.

Stone has many criticisms of the Supreme Court's performance in the early 20th century, but even he does not claim that what he sees as the complaisant tribunal of 1919 would have countenanced the shenanigans of 1798 by the Adams administration. And he positively lauds the Warren Court for having, in his view, corrected the wayward precedents of prior times. Given this trajectory, Stone's fears—particularly insofar as he sees the present war on terror as a gloomy recession—are seriously overwrought.

Stone's second recurrent theme is the power of free speech to win out over the enemies of freedom. For most civil libertarians, this is indeed an article of faith: not only is free speech itself the best antidote to peril, it is superior to any weapon of war. Thus Stone buys wholly into Justice Hugo Black's absolute conviction that Communists could safely be permitted to preach the need for violent overthrow of the government because (in Black's words) "free speech will *preserve*, not destroy, the nation" (emphasis in the original).

Taking a proper historical view, however, one might state the proposition differently: doctrinaire civil libertarians can always be relied on, no matter what the crisis, to minimize the danger faced by the nation. In the real world, moreover, free speech can only produce its vaunted corrective effects if it has both the inclination and the time to work. The problem is that it often does not.

Today's marketplace of ideas, for example, has been notably reluctant to engage even the subject of Islamofascism and the threat it poses to our institutions and our liberties. Nor does that marketplace strike one as a very effective weapon for bringing suicide murderers to heel, let alone for militating against electronically beamed *fatwas* capable of unleashing weapons of untold destructive power before other ideas have a meaningful opportunity to compete and persuade. A half-century before the advent of such technology, no less a free-speech icon than Learned Hand, soberly considering the Communist threat, found it cold comfort that violent insurrection might await a moment when "success seems possible." And Hand did not figure on militant Islam.

There is also a tendency of libertarians to discount danger out of their innate cynicism about government. Since crises provide government with the necessary justification to curtail freedoms, libertarians naturally reason that a crisis may not be authentic—the powers-that-be have manufactured it, or at the very least drastically overstated it. Nowhere is this propensity more clearly on display than in Stone's miniaturizing of the Communist threat. Apart from a few fleeting references to some "information revealed in the 1990's" that "suggests" the fears of a profound threat to subvert the United States government were "not unfounded," the Red Scares and the cold war signify, for Stone, "hysteria" plain and simple.

His choice of terms here is symptomatic. The CPUSA, Stone grudgingly and blandly admits, was tied to "international Communism"—a euphemism for a ruthless tyranny, the Soviet Union, which for decades enslaved half the world, murdering tens of millions. In classic understatement, Stone stipulates that the CPUSA engaged in some espionage. But this does not remotely begin to tell the story. The top-secret decryptions known as the "Venona Project," which Stone fails expressly to discuss although they were first disclosed nearly a decade ago, have confirmed beyond cavil that the U.S. was riven with Soviet spies—hundreds of them, several of whom were highly placed in the governments of FDR and Truman.

Sweeping all this under the rug, Stone festoons the scene with discredited leftist orthodoxy. "[S]hort, pudgy" Whittaker Chambers is unfavor-

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ably contrasted with the "tall, handsome, and elegant" Alger Hiss, who was the student and law clerk, respectively, of Stone's heroes Frankfurter and Holmes. Stone can bring himself only to say that "Hiss was convicted of perjury"—not that the perjury was about his being a Soviet spy, much less that Venona has confirmed Hiss as a traitor. Here too are lushly reprised the old hidebound attacks against Joseph McCarthy, next to equally hidebound paeans of praise to the likes of Harry Dexter White, the "bold thinker" who was the "principal architect of the International Monetary Fund." Projecting the image of a decent man harassed literally to death by wild-eyed right-wingers, Stone lamely drops a footnote relating that "[a]ccording to some researchers, White was indeed a spy."*

One is left wondering how, with Venona now having exposed the fatuity of Justice Douglas's dismissal of American Communism as a "bugbear," Stone could so blithely second Douglas's galactic miscalculation. One also wonders what Douglas might have made of militant Islam—a force much less successfully infiltrated into the American fabric than the Communists were, but from which a mere nineteen jihadists managed in one fell swoop to rip the heart out of the U.S. financial center, attack its military headquarters, cripple the airline industry, cause untold billions in damage, kill 3,000 people, and precipitate a shooting war.

WITHOUT SECURITY, there is no liberty at all. The fact that government is made up of human beings, and that human beings are certain occasionally to abuse any powers given them, is surely a rationale for narrowing those grants of power; but not for eradicating them, or reducing them to a quantity that fails to protect or even to take account of the higher interest that impelled the grant in the first place. Individual abuses of dissent are bad, but undermining the framework that ensures the right to dissent is immeasurably worse. This, as Holmes intuited, is supposed to be a matter of degree.

Moral clarity, moreover, postulates that some evils are so palpable we need not further test them in the marketplace. There are relatively few of them, but they do exist and we need not fear we are wrong about them. Such recognition is critical to the functioning of a healthy society, and declaring an end to discussion of any conceivable value they may have is very far from declaring a tyrannical power to end discussion of any topic disfavored by government. Do we really need additional ideological thrust-and-parry to know, for example, that the advocacy of genocide, or rape, or the indiscriminate mass slaughter of civilians is condemnable under any and all circumstances?

Anxiety over "chilling effects" is the most curious and overwrought of all concerns. Is it realistic to believe that we would actually lose the benefit of *any* idea worthy of the name were we to ban the advocacy of terrorism? Al Qaeda, its precursors, and its facilitators have been aggressively prosecuted in this country for over a decade—and are now targets of military operations and seizures of assets. Far from having chilled dissent, this enterprise has produced an alphabet soup of Islamic support organizations, many of which brazenly insist that terrorism, especially in Iraq or against Israel, is merely a form of resistance; relentless and fearless protest from the likes of the ACLU, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch; and an entertainment industry (as well as a political cohort) that cannot bestow enough plaudits on Michael Moore. Exactly what meaningful dissent will we miss if we proscribe the advocacy of murder, or of militant Islam's clarion call to violent jihad?

There are practical issues to be considered here as well. Prior to the 9/11 attacks, no terror organization in the world had been responsible for the slaughter of more Americans than the Iranian-backed Hizballah. Although its atrocities have been exhaustively documented, what has been little appreciated is the catalyzing role played by speech, especially broadcast advocacy, in its deadliness.

In an eye-opening new book, *Beacon of Hatred*,† Avi Jorisch chronicles al-Manar ("The Beacon"), the international television outlet of Hizballah. Launched in 1991, this has become the go-to station for news in much of the Islamic world, and the first choice of many viewers in times of tumult. Al-Manar reaches a daily worldwide audience of ten to fifteen million viewers, nearly the same number as the *combined* shares of America's top cable television news outlets.

But it is not simply news that one finds there. Al-Manar is a sedulous propaganda machine, designed to foment violence against Israel and the United States and meant, as one of its officials unabashedly told Jorisch, to "help people on the way to committing what you call in the West a suicide mission." Nor is this "help" faceless: Hizballah

* White was outed by Venona as a Soviet operative who secured high-level government positions for at least eleven other spies (also identified in Venona), while promoting a multi-billion-dollar loan package for Stalin. See John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, *Venona: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America* (2002).

† Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 105 pp. plus CD-ROM, $24.95 (paper). Jorisch is a colleague of mine at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies.

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Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah himself frequently appears, calling for "death to America."

The CD-ROM accompanying Jorisch's book contains a spellbinding series of video clips. It has long been known that in the new media age, technologies undreamed of by the CPUSA have spread militant Islam like wildfire. The blind sheik's "sermons," threaded with authoritative commands to violence, were widely distributed even while he was still nestled in Egypt. They and similar recordings were found among the belongings of jihadists tied to the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center and other terrorist plots. Bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and the Jordanian terror maestro Abu Musab al-Zarqawi have followed suit, videotaping instruction-laced diatribes (and beastly beheadings) for even broader international dissemination by streaming Internet and tapes delivered to outlets in the Arabic press.*

CITING AL-MANAR'S "incitement of terrorist activity," the State Department announced on December 17, 2004, that the station had been added to its Terrorism Exclusion List (TEL). The practical legal consequences of this are sparse. It merely permits the government to deport any alien contributing to the venture; it has no real effect on foreign backers who are not present here. It also leaves untouched the station's Washington bureau chief, who is an American citizen.

Still, the move, at least temporarily, has had a desirable shaming effect: Intelsat and GlobeCast, respectively Barbados- and French-owned satellite providers, have removed al-Manar from their menu offerings, which means the station is no longer available in the U.S. GlobeCast was no doubt influenced by the French government's decision to ban al-Manar for violating its hate-speech laws. As for American companies, any prospective boycott by them is wholly voluntary: al-Manar can be back in business in the U.S. the minute it gets a willing carrier.

The shutdown of al-Manar here would be compulsory and permanent rather than voluntary and tenuous if the State Department were to take the more meaningful step of designating it as a foreign terrorist organization, or if the Treasury Department were to add al-Manar to its list of specially designated global terrorist organizations.† Such designations would lay the legal groundwork for freezing al-Manar's assets, barring financial transactions with it, and rendering liable for U.S. prosecution anyone anywhere who provided material support to the station.

Given that this is no "abstraction"—terrorists are in fact killing Americans and energetically scheming to kill more—one would think such steps would be straightforward. But they are not. Al-Manar is not just any organization supporting terrorism, like a charitable front or a money exchange. It is a media outlet. Therefore, civil libertarians are mobilizing, insisting that the station's advocacy of barbarism is simply speech, purportedly making its special contribution to the great marketplace of ideas.

Instinctively sensing a chill First Amendment wind, Reporters Without Borders has protested that the U.S. is foolishly equating anti-Semitism with actual terrorism and that, under the modest step taken by the State Department, working journalists may be in danger of being branded terrorists. In a testimonial to the alchemic power of speech to cure all of our ills, *Slate*'s Jack Shafer invoked the Sedition Act of 1798, insisting that to ban the station would only increase Hizballah's standing, nullify America's ability to preach openness to "embattled Iraqis," and enact an unconstitutional restraint on speech "when there is no clear and present danger to the citizenry."

Closing in a manner that might have brought a smile to Geoffrey Stone's face, Shafer effuses:

> In suppressing al-Manar's message, the government is saying that it shall determine what the public can be trusted to know. Not even during the cold war, when the Soviet Union dedicated itself to the West's destruction, did the government block a sworn enemy's message from reaching us. . . . However vile and propagandistic Hizballah's TV station may be, my sense is that it's only one of the administration's targets. The other is you.

This, of course, is ludicrous. In tone, substance, and exhortation to immediate violence, Soviet media messages never resembled militant Islam's. Besides, the United States *did* seek to block the Communist message to the extent that it involved advocacy of violent overthrow by members of the CPUSA. Finally, there is not a scintilla of basis for the belief that targeting Hizballah's speech would be the first step in rolling back the civil liberties of Americans.

* Terrorists are known to use covert messages embedded in videos. Al-Manar broadcasts may well contain such coded communications, providing, as Jorisch observes, "a way for Hizballah's terrorist 'generals' to command their 'troops' in the field, for example, sleeper cells in the United States and elsewhere."

† These moves have been urged by a number of groups united in a Coalition Against Terrorist Media, with which both Jorisch and I are affiliated.

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STONE AND those who think like him are wrong. The point of a market is a free exchange. Terrorism perverts the very concept: seeking to compel acceptance not by persuasion but by fear, it is an exchange at the point of a gun. When it fails to win such acceptance, it does not go back to the drawing board to develop a better message or write a better book. It kills, massively. Why then should government hesitate either to ban al-Manar or to use every legal tool in its arsenal, including criminal prosecution, to convey in the strongest terms that the advocacy of terrorism in this day and age is entitled to no First Amendment protection?

What can deprive us of proper dissent, as Stone himself demonstrates, are laws that permit government to suppress dissent itself. Narrow laws that target exhortations toward violent conduct and lawlessness do no such thing. Inevitably, there is a weighing to be done, but it is a straightforward one. On one side of the ledger is the right of a good and lawful people, committed to liberty and tolerant of dissent to a degree unknown in the history of the world, not to be subjected to intimidation; on the other side is the right of purveyors of murder to pretend that there may be a shred of helpful "message" in their savagery. This is a contest?

As far as the Supreme Court is concerned, the advocacy of modern terrorism could comfortably be banned without undue introspection and with simple reference to the moral clarity of the ruling in *Chaplinsky*. All that is required is to apply "clear and present danger" to the world as it is today, not as it existed in 1798, 1865, 1919, 1951, or 1969. To the extent that we need to factor in the imminence of a threat, Learned Hand's formula, "the gravity of the 'evil' discounted by its improbability," should serve us well. The evil here could not be graver, and it is beyond calculations of probability—this enemy has killed repeatedly, and promises to kill anew.

In America's bumptious, bounteous marketplace, there are no limits on words as the building blocks of ideas, or on ideas as the legitimate instruments of persuasion. Terror has no place in such discourse. It is the function of law to express our society's judgments. Ours should be simple and humane: words that kill are not words we need abide.

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The Settlers' Crisis, and Israel's

Hillel Halkin

ISRAEL IS headed this summer for what may be the most severe political crisis of its history. On one side, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is resolved to go ahead with the military evacuation from the Gaza Strip of an estimated 8,000 Jewish settlers, most of them from Israel's half-million-strong modern Orthodox or "national-religious" community. The evacuation is part of Sharon's "disengagement" plan, itself meant to begin a unilateral drawing of Israel's borders in the absence of a peace settlement with the Palestinians.

On the other side, a powerful settlement movement and its supporters accuse this plan, despite the parliamentary majority it enjoys, of lacking democratic legitimacy. There have been dark hints of violent resistance on the part of settlers, as well as of massive insubordination in the army units assigned to carry out their removal—or, worse yet, of doomsday developments like another Rabin-style assassination, a blowing-up of Muslim shrines on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, or even outright civil war. In the words of Rabbi Yoel Bin-Nun, one of the most moderate of the settler leaders, it is as if two trains were speeding toward each other on the same tracks with no signal light to stop either of them.

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One might ask: all this over 8,000 Jewish settlers in Gaza—an overcrowded, impoverished strip of land in a corner of Palestine, less than 200 square miles in area, with more than a hundred Arab inhabitants for every Jew?

Indeed, routinely depicted in the Western media as consisting of wild-eyed Jews brandishing pocket Bibles in one hand and assault rifles in the other, the settler movement that is threatening to reduce Israel to chaos this summer does not even comprise a majority of the settlers in the occupied territories. Most of this population is either secular or ultra-Orthodox, and it tends to live in commuter towns like Ma'aleh Adumim on the eastern outskirts of Jerusalem, Betar Illit just south of the capital, and Ariel a half-hour's drive from Tel Aviv—locales that will find themselves on the Israeli side of the security fence now being constructed by the Sharon government.

It is only as one goes deeper into the territories, where the Jewish settlements become smaller and more remote and life in them is more isolated and dangerous, that the proportion of national-religious Jews shoots up sharply. Gush Katif, the cluster of villages in the southwest corner of the Gaza Strip in which most of the Gaza settlers reside, is such an area. Unlike their secular and ultra-Orthodox counterparts, most of whom have been induced to live in the territories by the prospect of inexpensive housing in attractive surroundings, the national-religious settlers take both elements of

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their hyphenated epithet with the utmost seriousness; living beyond Israel's pre-1967 borders is for them a matter of deep-seated ideological commitment in which the twin elements of Judaism and Zionism are inseparable.

For these settlers, the political crisis over Gaza is thus only superficially political and only superficially over Gaza. It is rather a defining ideological moment, one that jeopardizes not only their relation to the Jewish state but their innermost identity.

THE ROOTS of this crisis go back far, predating the beginnings of Jewish settlement in the territories and even the 1967 war that made it possible. Their origins lie in a figure iconic in Zionist religious circles but little known outside of them: Rabbi Abraham Isaac Hacohen Kook (1865-1935).

Kook, who served as Ashkenazi chief rabbi of British Mandate Palestine from 1921 until his death, belonged intellectually to the second generation of religious Zionism. The first, represented in the 19th and early 20th century by rabbis like Tsvi Hirsch Kalischer (1795-1874), Samuel Mohilever (1824-1898), and Isaac Jacob Reines (1839-1915), had fought to legitimize Zionism as an idea against a hostile Eastern-European Orthodox establishment. To that establishment, Zionism was a form of false messianism, a rebellion against divine Providence whose sin lay in the attempt to cast off the tribulations of exile by dint of mere human initiative.

The early religious Zionists argued that, to the contrary, Zionism was no such thing. Rather, it was strictly limited in its goals, which were to improve the material and spiritual lot of the Jewish people by reestablishing a portion of it in its land. Since it was not meant to "force the end" of God's redemption—an impatience with history last seen in Jewish life in the disastrous 17th-century movement of Sabbatianism, which had left much of the Jewish world psychologically devastated and in fissure—there was nothing religiously impermissible about it.

What made it easier for religious Zionists like Mohilever or Reines to advance these arguments was the fact that early Zionist settlement in Palestine was itself largely Orthodox in character; at least at first, then, they were not faced with the more problematic aspects of joining forces in a common cause with secular or political Zionism. Even after the meteoric appearance of Theodor Herzl in the 1890's, with his galvanizing message of an international Zionist movement capable of negotiating a solution to the Jewish condition with the great powers, the problem was not perceived as acute. A prospering Orthodox community in the land of Israel combining religious observance with a wholesome economic and social existence would, the religious Zionists maintained, attract secular Jews to its ranks as well, thus proving Herzl wrong in declaring Zionism to be a strictly secular movement. In Judaism, after all, nationhood and religion were one.

But events did not bear out these expectations. Not only did Herzl's "political Zionism" remain resolutely secular in its approach, but the wave of *halutzim* or young socialist pioneers who arrived in Palestine in the early years of the 20th century and established themselves there as its dominant political force were openly *anti*-religious as Herzl never was. For the Orthodox Jew, collaboration with a Zionist Left demonstratively profligate in its behavior was difficult to defend.

Of course, it was still possible in such circumstances to hew to a modified version of the old line. This was done by the Mizrahi party, founded by Reines in 1902, which sought to work with secular Zionism when possible and against it when not. But for Kook, a student at the renowned Lithuanian yeshiva of Volozhin who had settled in Palestine in 1904, such an approach was, while tactically defensible, intellectually unsatisfying. A scholar with kabbalistic leanings and a mystical sense of life, Kook demanded a more unitary view. Even a partial alliance with secular Zionism was acceptable to him only if the latter could be grasped, not as a necessary evil, but as a positive good. Full of admiration for the pioneers who tilled Palestine's soil and drained its swamps, while grieving over their lack of religious faith, he replaced a politics of religious Zionism with a theology.

This theology was messianic. The Orthodox anti-Zionists, Kook declared, were right: Zionism *was* redemptive in its goals. But they were also wrong, since, properly understood, the events unfolding in Palestine were not a human attempt to coerce God but God's attempt to enlist humanity and, above all, the Jewish people in His plan. The *halutzim* laboring to reestablish this people on their land and in a society based on equality and justice were performing God's work; they were in fact doing what religious Jews were incapable of doing, since the ideals that inspired them could not have taken root in an intellectually stagnant Orthodox world.

True, Kook wrote, these secular pioneers failed to understand that theirs were at heart the loftiest ideals of the Torah; but this was only a transitional phase, at whose end they would embrace Judaism

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in its entirety. Then, just as the biblical prophets had predicted, God's word would go forth from Zion in a perfected religion to which a world weary of injustice and violence would turn, and the messianic age would be under way. Indeed, it already was under way. The same *halutzim* who publicly desecrated the Sabbath were the *at'halta de-ge'ula*: redemption's onset.

It is not difficult to detect kabbalistic influences in Kook's thought, especially the influence of the Lurianic Kabbalah of the 16th and 17th centuries with its shift of emphasis from an eschatological messiah sent at a sudden moment of God's choosing to a gradual messianic process in which human endeavor plays a crucial role. There was also, though he would have vehemently denied it, a parallel between Kook's reasoning and the paradoxical Sabbatian concept of *mitsva ha-ba'a be'avera*, the fulfillment of God's commandments by their violation. Just as the followers of the false messiah Sabbatai Zevi believed that by performing forbidden acts in a spirit of devoutness they were restoring to their divine source the "sparks of holiness" trapped in the lower worlds, so Kook held that the dedicated life of a secular Zionist brought God's redemption closer even as it broke God's own laws.

Despite his stature as chief rabbi, Kook's thought remained marginal among religious Zionists, both in his lifetime and afterward. Messianism was feared by them, no less for its intrinsic dangers than as a tacit vindication of the ultra-Orthodox in their opposition to Zionism. Kook was admired more for his personal qualities than for his theology, which was propagated after his death at a Jerusalem yeshiva named for him and headed by his son Rabbi Tsvi Yehuda Kook.

Not even the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 could greatly strengthen Kook's intellectual influence. Although a prayer was added to the modern Orthodox liturgy referring to the new state as *reshit ts'mihat ge'ulatenu*, "the first burgeoning of our redemption," there were too many painful reminders of the partiality of the achievement, including the destruction of European Jewry in the Holocaust and the loss in 1948 of the old city of Jerusalem and the biblical heartland of Judea and Samaria, for most observant Israelis to regard this as other than lip service to traditional aspirations.

Israel was then governed by David Ben-Gurion and the Left. The Mizrahi, its name now changed to the National Religious party, participated as a junior partner in coalition governments and resigned itself to the partition of biblical and Mandate Palestine more readily than did the secular Right. For a non-redemptive religious Zionism, that partition was merely a fact, albeit a tragic one. For Kook's disciples, on the other hand, it was a theological dilemma—for how could redemption be accompanied by the loss of the Temple Mount, the Western Wall, Rachel's Tomb, and the Cave of the Patriarchs?

And then came the 1967 war and swept the dilemma away. More than that: at the end of six dizzying days of combat, with all of historic Palestine unexpectedly—miraculously—in Jewish hands, Kook's vision suddenly made dazzling sense. After all, if a miracle *had* taken place, it was a miracle performed by the secular army of a secular Jewish state. The only theology of Judaism that could account for this was being taught at the Merkaz Ha-Rav Kook yeshiva in Jerusalem. In a sudden acceleration of history, the *at'halta de-ge'ula* had shifted into high gear. The urgent task was to respond to its challenge by settling Jews everywhere in a now "undivided Land of Israel," the complete restoration of which to the Jewish people was the next stage in the redemptive process.

Although Jewish religious settlement in the occupied territories developed only gradually after the 1967 war, its ideological leadership was Kookian from the start. Even before banding together in 1974 in the organization known as Gush Emunim—the "faith-keeping bloc"—this leadership had begun to function as a geographical avant-garde. Letting the Labor government of those years settle the areas that a national consensus was determined to keep in any peace settlement—greater Jerusalem, the Jordan Valley, Israel's narrow waist opposite Tel Aviv—it fought to expand them by unauthorized settlements elsewhere that eventually won government recognition.

The repopulating in 1967 of Gush Etsyon southwest of Bethlehem, where Jewish villages had been overrun by the Arab Legion in 1948; the reestablishment a year later of a Jewish presence in Hebron; the stubborn and eventually successful campaign of 1974 to open up to Jews the heavily populated Palestinian hill country of Samaria—all were spearheaded by Kook's followers. Defying initial attempts to evict them, they took as their model the early *halutzim*, who also had redeemed every bit of the Land of Israel that they could.

Gush Emunim and its adherents saw themselves as the new *halutzim*. Indeed, they were a higher form of the *halutz*, since in them was fulfilled Kook's dream of the Zionist pioneer grown

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aware of his true mission. Gradually, they won over a large part of the national-religious community—some of it, especially its most idealistic young, as settlers, others as converts to Kook's doctrine. The spread of this doctrine energized the entire national-religious community in Israel, giving it a sense of importance and purpose it never before had.

UNTIL 1967, this community, in its own eyes, had played second fiddle to secular Zionism, which set and carried out the national agenda. Now the baton had passed to it. Moreover, this was happening at a time when, once the euphoria of the 1967 victory yielded to national depression following the Yom Kippur war of 1973, the Zionist Left was ideologically and politically languishing. In the midst of an increasingly permissive, consumerist, post-Zionist secular society, the national-religious camp prided itself on alone continuing to carry the Zionist banner. With its comprehensive school system that stressed ideals of serving the nation no longer inculcated elsewhere; its mass-participation B'nei Akiva youth movement, the last of its kind in a country in which such organizations had once played a crucial role; its high rate of voluntarism, particularly in the army, whose elite units now drew heavily on national-religious youth; and the overall resistance of its public to the inroads of hedonism, this perception was not unjustified.

That this Zionist banner was now being held aloft in the name of redemptive beliefs was no secret in Gush Emunim circles, even if the beliefs themselves were played down in contacts with an outside world that needed to be convinced of the Jewish right to the Land of Israel by the more conventional language of historically justified territorial claims, legitimate security concerns, the dangers of Palestinian statehood, and so on. Faced, however, with the fact that this language, too, convinced few but the already converted, Gush Emunim encouraged its own rank-and-file with unconcealed messianic proclamations. Its literature is full of passages like the following from a 1971 article by Rabbi Ya'akov Filber:

> Above and beyond everything that we are doing is a divine force pushing us onward, according to God's plan, toward the final redemption. . . . Since the liberation of the Land of Israel west of the Jordan, not a day goes by without some attempt, diplomatic or military, to turn back the wheel of history. . . . There is not a country in the world—including the government of Israel—which holds that the state of Israel should retain all of this land. And yet, wondrously, reality has allowed no circumstances to emerge that would require Israel to withdraw, even slightly, from the borders created by the Six-Day war.

God's instrument of redemption was the state of Israel. Though this or that Israeli government might be blind to the significance of what was happening, the state was nevertheless its agency. "All the rest," Tsvi Yehuda Kook wrote, was composed of

> mere detail, smaller or larger impediments, [technical] problems and complications; none of it can detract in any way from the holiness of the state. The inner value of the state has nothing to do with whether its citizens are religiously observant. Naturally, we would like the entire nation to live a life of Torah and its commandments, but the state is holy in any case!

Ostensibly, the son was inhabiting the conceptual world of his father—and yet the concepts had changed. Instead of pioneers, a state; instead of the Land of Israel as a platform for a perfect society, an imperfect society as a platform for the Land of Israel; instead of a redemptive process carried forward by revolutionary secular lives, a process leaning on institutionalized secular might. Never indeed had secular Israel been so imperfect, so far from the senior Kook's ideals. But in the excitement of settling the hilltops of the land, the leaders of Gush Emunim failed to notice the sleight-of-hand by which these substitutions were made.

In 1977, the year in which the Israeli Right led by Menachem Begin first came to power, there were 20,000 settlers in the West Bank and Gaza. In 1985 there were 50,000; in 1990, 100,000; in 2000, 200,000; in 2005, after four years of Palestinian terror had made the settlements among the least safe places in Israel, 250,000.

Such exponential growth in the face of danger and worldwide criticism left the settlement leadership confident that, despite the setbacks of the 1993 Oslo accord, the anti-settler and anti-religious atmosphere created in Israel by the 1995 Rabin assassination, and the solid phalanx of international support for a Palestinian state, things were going its way. The redemption, once unleashed, could not be stopped. As Rabbi Chaim Druckman, a former Knesset member from the National Religious party, put it, "There can be ups and downs, but there can be no going back in the [redemptive] process."

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This, then, is the background to today's national-religious opposition to Ariel Sharon's disengagement plan for Gaza. Even so, however, does not the violent intensity of that opposition seem, on the face of it, out of all proportion?

Granted, Sharon's plan can be criticized on rational grounds. It can be argued, for example, that no territory should be ceded to the Palestinians without a quid pro quo on their part, which in this instance Sharon has not sought. Still, there is no tactical case for permanently retaining the Gush Katif settlements. They are not contiguous with Israel proper, being separated from it by the large Palestinian city of Rafah, and there is an unreasonableness to the fact that they occupy close to 15 percent of the Gaza Strip's insufficient land while their inhabitants comprise less than 1 percent of its population.

Gaza itself has little strategic value, and even less of a history of Jewish life. Some rabbinic authorities in the past have denied that Jewish law considers it a part of the Land of Israel at all. Therefore, even if tactically misconceived, the relocation of its 8,000 Jews, whose fate under Palestinian rule would be unpleasant, should not, one would think, plunge Israel into grimmer discord than did the removal of settlements in Sinai as part of the peace agreement with Egypt in 1982—an operation fiercely opposed by those evicted but quickly recovered from.

But Gaza is not, ultimately, the real issue. Both Ariel Sharon and the settlers know that, if this disengagement succeeds, it will be a dress rehearsal for what inevitably must come next: a similar withdrawal, involving far greater numbers of settlers, from most of the West Bank. This retrenchment, most likely to the security fence being built partly along and partly beyond the pre-1967 Israeli-Jordanian frontier, will be dictated by powerful considerations: the improbability of reaching a Palestinian-Israeli peace agreement in the foreseeable future; mounting international pressure to make significant concessions to a post-Arafat Palestinian Authority; the drastic deterioration of Israel's image in the world due to the prolongation of its military occupation of the territories; the demographic precariousness of the Jewish majority west of the Jordan;* and, finally, the wisdom of obtaining the backing of the most friendly administration Israel has ever had in Washington for the best permanent borders that Israel can make for itself under the present circumstances. Sharon, still the territorial maximalist he always has been, believes that it is imperative to withdraw from as much of the West Bank as is necessary in order to save as much of it as is possible.

For the national-religious community, however, such a withdrawal, involving the surrender of most of the biblical territory conquered in 1967, would be not only a physical disaster uprooting tens of thousands of its elite from their homes, or an emotional and psychological disaster. It would be a theological disaster—the smashing of a world-view that has come to shape its thinking.

And yet this very thinking has rendered it incapable of presenting its case to the Israeli public by means of a rational discussion of the issues or a laying-out of realistic political alternatives. Fifteen years ago, it was still possible for it to sketch a semi-plausible scenario for the retention of the West Bank. Massive Jewish immigration from the ex-Soviet Union coupled with heavy Palestinian emigration to the Persian Gulf would, it was said, improve the demographic balance; the Palestinian refusal to accept the state of Israel within its pre-1967 borders would forestall international pressure on Israel to withdraw to those borders; the end of cold-war rivalries in the Middle East would make the world lose interest in Israeli-Palestinian conflict; and so forth.

Today, none of this has transpired. All that is left, apart from protesting Ariel Sharon's high-handedness, is a Kookian faith. Even Yisrael Harel, the most respected of the settler movement's political commentators, has been reduced to refuting the charge that the settlers are relying on miracles by responding:

> Zionism, including the religious brand, never relied on miracles. It created them. . . . That is how we produced the solutions to our greatest difficulties. But that was when we still had faith in our capabilities and the justice of our cause.

This is not a rationally debatable proposition; nor, were Sharon to yield to the protesters and call for the national referendum on disengagement that they have been demanding, could they win it with such an argument. They can only hope to scare the country off from the Gaza disengagement with the specter of what will happen if it proceeds—or, fail-

* The fundamental demographic picture is not changed by a recently released study in which it is claimed that the usual analyses of Jewish and Arab population figures have been inaccurate and unduly alarmist. Even if these findings are correct, a relatively stable Jewish-Arab population ratio of 60 to 40 percent west of the Jordan, put forth by the authors as the best-possible-case interpretation of the data, would still preclude Israel's annexing the West Bank and granting full citizenship rights to its Palestinian inhabitants without turning into a bi-national rather than a Jewish state.

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ing that, to turn it into so traumatic an event that no Israeli government will dare repeat it on a greater scale in the West Bank. It is either that or the implosion of their mental universe.

JEWISH HISTORY offers us some examples of what can happen when a messianic bubble bursts. In the case of Sabbatianism, which saw this occur when the messianic pretender Sabbatai Zevi was forced by the Ottoman Sultan to convert to Islam in 1666, the great majority of its adherents, chastened and disillusioned, reverted to normal Jewish lives. The remainder went different ways. Some stayed in the Jewish community while secretly continuing to believe in Sabbatai Zevi's messiahship, rationalized by them in esoteric and paradoxical ways. Some formed new, quasi-Jewish sects, like the Doenmeh in Turkey and the Frankists in Poland. Some lost all religious faith and drifted out of the Jewish sphere entirely.

Something analogous might happen in the national-religious community of Israel should disengagement from Gaza, and at a later date from much of the West Bank, take place. With Kook's redemptive vision shattered, and the "holy state" of Israel diminished to a profane body that has bitterly disappointed them, small numbers of national-religious Jews may choose to emigrate. Others may defect not from Israel but from religion. Still others may join the ranks of an anti-Zionist ultra-Orthodoxy whose initial predictions regarding religious Zionism will now appear to have been strikingly confirmed. Already there is a noticeable trend among some modern Orthodox youth in Israel toward stricter standards of ritual observance and a more dismissive attitude toward secular institutions and culture; the collapse of the settler movement could push them and others the rest of the way.

As happened with the Sabbatians, however, the preponderance of national-religious Israelis will surely stay where they are—embittered and angry, it may be, and driven to intense soul-searching, but still part of the community they were raised in and still committed to both Judaism and life in a Jewish state. Intellectually, most will probably find their way back to one or another contemporary version of pre-Kookian religious Zionism, which has never ceased to be the outlook of some modern Orthodox Israelis and of elements—increasingly marginalized in recent years—in the National Religious party.

A smaller group may cling to a Kookian theology while accepting outward defeat. Perhaps the redemption *would* have come, they may reason, if only a faithless secular Israel had not refused to play its assigned role. ("The perfect faith, possessed in all his being, that our rabbi [Abraham Isaac Hacohen Kook] had in the manifest End does not gainsay the clear awareness that we may, God forbid, miss the opportunity," wrote Rabbi David Hentshke of Gush Emunim as far back as 1985.) Or perhaps redemption will still come when, given a second chance—who knows what the future of the Middle East holds in store?—a regenerate Israel does not repeat its mistake.

Similar efforts to explain away failure can be found in the other great Jewish messianic movement of our times, the one that has taken place in Lubavitch Hasidism. While most Lubavitchers have resigned themselves to the fact that the late Rebbe, though worthy of being the messiah, was actually not, some continue to think that he was prevented from fulfilling his destiny only by an undeserving generation, while others believe that he never died but will return to fulfill that destiny when the time is ripe.

IT IS indeed remarkable that in our day Jewish religious messianism has returned, not once but twice, and in ways that, 50 years ago, no historian or sociologist of religion would have considered possible. It has often been remarked upon that both Zionism and Communism, the latter of which was founded by the grandson of a rabbi and attracted Jews in disproportionate numbers, were nourished by secularized messianic impulses. But implicit in this insight has been the assumption that, in modern times, such impulses could come to expression *only* in a secular guise. Permanently sobered by the Sabbatian debacle, and tempered by modern rationalism, Judaism itself, even in its most traditional forms, was assumed to be immune to yet another messianic outburst.

Thanks to this assumption, many observers (myself included) who were sympathetic to the settlement movement, viewing it as a valuable element in Israel's struggle to redraw its dangerously constricted pre-1967 borders, were slow to grasp the strength of the messianic forces driving it. Although its Kookian theology was present from the start, one was tempted to dismiss this as a metaphorical structure, a way of intellectually organizing an attachment to the Jewish homeland that would not, ultimately, prove an obstacle to rational decision-making. When the day for such decisions came, it was presumed, many religious settlers would understand the need for them, and

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most of those who did not would accept the decree of majority rule. It was insufficiently appreciated that this would be no more cognitively possible for them than it is possible for a man hearing voices to accept the fact that they do not exist.

The settlers might not have come to the pass they are in had they understood in time that, by accepting Tsvi Yehuda Kook's sanctification of the secular state, they were hallowing the very force that would betray them. He who aligns himself with institutionalized power must realize that it obeys its own laws.

For Judaism, the lesson is that the potential for messianism is always there. Although it can exist as mere potential for centuries—apart from sporadic episodes, a millennium-and-a-half passed from its full-fledged eruption in Christianity and two catastrophic revolts against Rome until its full-fledged return in Sabbatianism—it remains a built-in feature of the Jewish religious psyche. The same mind that understands that an imperfect reality needs a Law and its limits will always yearn for a perfected state of being in which these limits are overthrown, and will always crave the excitement of overthrowing them.

The messianic insurrection that lies ahead this summer if disengagement from Gaza is carried out will be greater or smaller depending on various things—the degree to which the more responsible settler leaders are determined to prevent it, the tact and common sense of Israel's government, and the Israeli public's ability to deliver the clear message that it will not tolerate chaos in its streets. Sooner or later, the dust will settle. When it finally does, it will reveal a map of a divided land of Israel that is not as clean and aesthetically satisfying as the one, with its straight line running from the top of the Jordan River to the bottom of the Dead Sea and thence to the Gulf of Aqaba, that the settlers want. It will be an ugly mess of little squiggles, full of loops and zigzags, twisting and turning and doubling back on itself to pass between a Jewish and an Arab village here, an Arab and a Jewish town there—a perfect horror of a map, uglier even than the one that Israel lived with before 1967. Perhaps it will be revised or erased some day. In the meantime, with as many Israelis as possible on one side, and as many Palestinians as possible on the other, it will have to do, the very symbol of an unredeemed world.

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What Became of the CIA

Gabriel Schoenfeld

My first personal encounter with the CIA came in 1989. I was living in Washington, D.C., editing a new publication about Communist affairs under the auspices of the Center for Strategic and International Studies. There had been a spate of violence directed against the Communist authorities in Russia; I was among the first to discuss and analyze these events, publishing my findings not only in my own research bulletin but also, to wider attention, in the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Washington Post*.

Shortly after my articles appeared I got a phone call from a second secretary of the Soviet embassy. He was fascinated, he told me, by what I had written, and he wanted to talk. I understood at once that a Soviet diplomat with an interest in American views of political violence in his own country would in all likelihood be a KGB officer. When we met at my office a few days later he turned out to be younger than I had expected, perhaps in his mid-thirties, with a broad smile and heavily pockmarked skin. His English was heavily accented but fluent. We had a pleasant talk for an hour. I described my findings in somewhat greater detail, and together we speculated about the future. And that seemed to be that.

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Several days later I received another call, this time from someone who, explaining that he was with the CIA, said he had heard through the grapevine that I had met with a Soviet diplomat. The agency was interested in obtaining further information about him. Would I agree to get together? Despite not having much to say, I readily assented.

At the suggestion of my new acquaintance, we met at Tiberio, a posh Italian restaurant on K Street. The agency man, who was perhaps the same age as my KGB contact, had a studied nondescript appearance. Before his present assignment, to a unit debriefing Americans who had had contact with foreigners of interest to the government, he had been stationed in Rome for two years; he could not, he told me, say anything more about what he had been doing there. After a few minutes of such talk, we opened our menus. As he perused the choices, a question sprang from his lips that, when its implications sank in, shocked me to the core: "What's prosciutto?"

It is, of course, easy to sneer at the CIA, at its blunders in recent years, and at the revealing cluelessness of a junior employee fresh from two years' immersion in Italy. In fairness, though, the task the agency has been assigned is next to impossible: to observe what is happening inside nearly 200 national governments, to follow internal developments in thousands upon thousands of poten-

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tially hostile sub-national groups around the world, and to make sense not only of such discrete information but of broader trends in global politics and society that bear on our national security.

For those in charge of this vast enterprise, the ultimate issue is necessarily one of resource allocation: on what targets should reconnaissance satellites focus their lenses; which communications lines should be intercepted; on which strategic problems should the best analytical minds be brought to bear? And even if resources are always allocated with optimal savvy and thoughtfulness, the unlimited scope of the task, the extensive bureaucracy needed to perform it, and the necessary secrecy in which the work is wrapped virtually guarantee periodic lapses.

Unfortunately, in the age of global terrorism, lapses are unacceptable. The price of intelligence failure was borne in on all of us on September 11; and, given the very real prospect that terrorists will manage to acquire weapons of mass destruction, that price could rise much higher. The question is thus whether our intelligence services can be made to perform better than they have been doing; and, if so, how.

In thinking about this problem, the 9/11 Commission and other observers have pointed to a series of bureaucratic deformations within the agency. These fall under such headings as "stovepiping" or excessive compartmentalization, turf battling, information hoarding, group think, mirror-imaging, and many other terms familiar to readers of textbooks on organizations in disarray. Another line of inquiry, pursued in a still classified and only partially leaked report prepared by the CIA's inspector general (IG), focuses on a different kind of breakdown: the failure of the agency's leadership to direct adequate resources to the prevention of terrorism.

To address all of these shortcomings, President Bush has installed a new CIA director, Porter Goss, who against fierce resistance has been reshuffling the senior ranks. Congress, for its part, has moved with celerity and with White House support to follow the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission, enacting the most far-reaching restructuring of the intelligence community since the founding of the CIA itself. Among the concrete measures now being set in place, one calls for a new inter-agency center for counterterrorism, another for a national intelligence director with cabinet rank who will both preside over the CIA and coordinate its work with the other fourteen government bodies that make up the U.S. "intelligence community."

Will these reforms make a difference for the better? A perusal of those portions of the 9/11 Commission report devoted to the actual performance of the CIA does not inspire confidence. To the contrary: from that report, from congressional documents, and from a number of new books, it seems evident that the agency's problems originate in realms deeper than can be addressed by a reconfiguration of the organizational chart.

EXHIBIT A in any discussion of these matters should be *Imperial Hubris*,* a best-selling book by "Anonymous," who is described on the dust jacket as "a senior U.S. intelligence official with nearly two decades of experience in national-security issues." As became known not long after the book's publication, "Anonymous" is Michael Scheuer, until his resignation in the fall of 2004 a member of the CIA's senior intelligence service. Between 1996 and 1999 Scheuer was in charge of "running operations against al Qaeda." After leaving that post, he became a high-level manager in the agency's counterterrorism center, the perch from which he wrote his book.

Imperial Hubris is subtitled *Why the West Is Losing the War on Terror*. This poses a loaded question from the start, since it is hardly self-evident that the West *is* losing the war on terror. But Scheuer is strongly convinced—and stridently insistent—that we are. Surveying U.S. counterterrorism policy in the period leading up to and following September 11, he adduces several major reasons why.

In the first place, he contends, American policymakers have failed to grasp the character of our adversaries' enmity. Here our intellectual weakness begins with a faulty appraisal of Osama bin Laden himself. We have tended to caricature the mastermind of September 11 as a "deranged gangster," someone "prone to and delighting in the murder of innocents," and an "apocalyptic terrorist in search of Armageddon." But, in reality, bin Laden is a strategically astute "practical warrior"—as well as "the most respected, loved, romantic, charismatic, and perhaps able figure in the last 150 years of Islamic history." Far from seeking the fiery destruction of the West, he is pursuing a series of narrow and tangible objectives.

A related misconception, according to Scheuer, is that bin Laden and his fellow Islamists hate the West for what it is rather than for what it does. Not so, he maintains. Al Qaeda does not want to destroy our liberal democratic institutions, our open society, or our freewheeling way of life.

* Brassey's, 309 pp., $27.50.

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Rather, it is engaged in a "defensive jihad." Many Muslims have a "plausible perception" that the things they hold most dear—"God, Islam, their brethren, and Muslim lands"—are being "attacked by America." We are thus not enmeshed in a clash of civilizations but in something much less grand. The "key causal factor in our confrontation with Islam" is "a few, specific U.S. policies."

Scheuer has a short list of these policies, beginning with our general stance in the Middle East. There, in the aftermath of World War II, the U.S. moved "from being the much-admired champion of liberty and self-government to the hated and feared advocate of a new imperial order." This drive for hegemony, exemplified most recently by President Bush's "avaricious, premeditated, unprovoked war" against Iraq, bears many of "the same characteristics as 19th-century European imperialism: military garrisons; economic penetration and control; support for leaders, no matter how brutal and undemocratic, as long as they obey the imperial power; and the exploitation and depletion of natural resources."

A major outpost of our neo-imperial ambitions is the state of Israel. Or is it the other way around? All over the Middle East, writes Scheuer, the United States is now seen as a country that has "abandoned multiple generations of Palestinians to cradle-to-grave life in refugee camps" while "arming and funding [Israel's] anti-Muslim violence." It is, indeed, a wonder how Israel, "a theocracy-in-all-but-name of only about six million people . . . ultimately controls the extent and even the occurrence of an important portion of political discourse and national-security debate in a country of 270-plus million people."

The key to this puzzle, Scheuer contends, lies in Israel's crafty use of "diplomats, politicians, intelligence services, [and] U.S. citizen spies," along with "wealthy Jewish-American organizations," in order to "lac[e] tight the ropes binding the American Gulliver to the Jewish state." But even to raise this subject, he warns darkly, is perilous to one's health: our "political and social landscape is littered with the battered individuals . . . who dared to criticize Israel, or, even more heretically, to question the value to U.S. national interests of the country's overwhelmingly one-way alliance with Israel."

SENTIMENTS LIKE these mark the author of *Imperial Hubris* as something of a political hybrid—a cross, not to put too fine a point on it, between an overwrought Buchananite and a raving Chomskyite. This alone, one might think, should have unfitted him for a high position of trust within the CIA. But that is not the end of it. Even as he lambastes the United States from his isolationist position, reserving special fury not only for America's alliance with Israel but for our "hallucinatory crusade for democracy," Scheuer also swivels to assail Washington for being insufficiently hawkish in waging the war on terror.

"An Unprepared and Ignorant Lunge to Defeat" is how Scheuer titles his chapter on Afghanistan. What appears to exercise him most is the fact that, after September 11, the United States waited almost a *month* to respond to al Qaeda's attacks. Instead of a "savage, preplanned U.S. military response," there was "inexcusable delay" and "supine inaction." This had the effect of turning the "human-economic calamity" of September 11 into a "catastrophe" and a "full-blown disaster."

The same passivity supposedly on display in Afghanistan is, Scheuer asserts, undermining the broader war on terrorism. To our lasting peril, we have ignored the maxims of General Curtis LeMay, who taught us that war is about killing people and that "when you have killed enough of them they stop fighting." What we need to do, and immediately, is to "proceed with relentless, brutal, and, yes, blood-soaked offensive military actions," and these should not cease "until we have annihilated the Islamists who threaten us."

Whence this peculiar congeries of views, advanced with supreme self-confidence and heedless inattention to fact? The workings of Scheuer's mind owe much, he discloses, to an early supervisor who taught him that the key to "framing and solving intelligence problems was to first 'do the checkables.'" The "checkables," he explains,

> are those parts of a problem that were knowable, the things on which there were classified archival records, pertinent and available human experience, current human assets to consult, or even the results of media and academic research. . . . The supervisor's recipe was to exploit to exhaustion the "checkables" . . . and thereby identify the information we need to acquire before acting to resolve the problem.

This approach, whether dressed up in agency jargon or simply called basic research, would seem obvious enough. But, to the distress of Scheuer, virtually everyone in the U.S. government, except him, has shunned it. In *Imperial Hubris* he hammers this theme incessantly, and always in the same words. Here is a very partial selection from a single chapter:

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- "it is time to look at some of the easily checkable checkables that were obviously not checked";
- "therein lies another example of the cost of not reviewing the checkables";
- "something that could have been readily forecast if the checkables had been checked";
- "to make matters worse, the checkables were available in local public and university libraries";
- "a perfect example of the unnecessary mess that always ensues when time is not taken to review and digest the 'checkables'";
- "the list of 'checkables' was immense . . . and yet tragically. . . almost no checking seems to have been done."

And so forth. It is, then, on the basis of his own, contrasting "willingness to review the checkables" that Scheuer asks us to accept his judgment of Osama bin Laden as a "gentle, generous, talented, and personally courageous" leader, his assessment of our campaign in Afghanistan as "wretchedly ill-conceived," and his conclusion that the collapse of that country's government is guaranteed to happen, perhaps not "tomorrow, the day after, or even next year . . . but come it will."*

All of which leaves only two questions. How did a person of such demonstrable mediocrity of mind and unhinged views achieve the rank he did in the CIA, and how could so manifestly wayward and damaging a work have been published by someone in the agency's employ? To the second question, at least, an answer of a sort is ready to hand, if one that raises disturbing questions of its own.

Last summer, CIA censors took the unusual step of permitting Michael Scheuer to publish *Imperial Hubris* in the middle of the presidential election season. This move, along with several simultaneous leaks of classified intelligence studies painting a grim portrait of the American campaign in Iraq, struck many as a blatant intervention by the agency into electoral politics, with Scheuer being used as a proxy. According to the *Washington Post*, however, the decision had an entirely different motive. Four top CIA managers had given Scheuer a green light out of fear that, if blocked, he would resign from the agency, thereby "earning even more attention for a work they viewed as partly ludicrous."

Whether the decision was a CIA calculation or (yet another) miscalculation, we are still left with the question of how, for a period of years, a man of this caliber had been given primary responsibility for the effort to understand and counter Osama bin Laden. But the bad news is that the presence of such a figure in a pivotal position within the CIA was not a fluke.

For helpful light on this subject, among others, we can turn to another new book, *Denial and Deception* by Melissa Boyle Mahle.† Until 2002, Mahle was an Arabic-speaking field operative in the CIA's clandestine service. With degrees from Berkeley and Columbia, she also served as an agency recruiter, visiting college campuses in search of suitable candidates for the directorate of operations. At some point in her career, she herself became the object of a counterintelligence inquiry and was eventually forced to resign. The details of her dismissal remain classified; her only comment here is that "it was not a friendly departure. I made a mistake, to which I admitted freely, accepting responsibility for a poor decision."

But *Denial and Deception* is by no means the work of a disgruntled whistleblower. Like Scheuer, Mahle had a bird's-eye view of CIA counterterrorism operations in the period leading up to September 11. Unlike Scheuer, she is a calm and thoughtful writer, and her book is a dispassionate attempt to probe "why the agency failed to accurately predict the nature of the threat, comprehensively warn of the breadth of the threat, and effectively disrupt the planning, preparation, and execution of the attacks."

In addressing this subject, Mahle draws on her personal experiences running CIA operations in Israel, the West Bank, Gaza, and other Middle Eastern locales. She also ranges widely over the recent history of the agency, recounting the attempts by successive directors to reshape its internal workings.

As Mahle is not the first to show, and as can be pieced together from other sources, including declassified CIA documents, a bureaucratic sclerosis seems to have gripped the agency over the course of the 1980's and 90's. It was on especially vivid display in the case of the Soviet mole Aldrich Ames. Despite the agency's claims that it recruits only the best and the brightest, Ames was hired after earning a B.A. in history from George Washington University with a middling grade average of B–.

* In light of his obsession with checking the checkables, it is positively bizarre that Scheuer seems constitutionally unable to spell, or to check the spelling of, figures in and out of government who appear in his book—L. Paul Bremer III, the first U.S. proconsul in Iraq, is rendered as L. Paul Bremmer, General Curtis LeMay as General Lemay, the foreign-policy analysts Edward Luttwak and Adam Garfinkle as the duo of Lutwack and Garfinckle, etc.

† *Denial and Deception: An Insider's View of the CIA from Iran-Contra to 9/11*. Thunder's Mouth/Nation, 320 pp., $26.00.

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This, moreover, seems to have marked the high-water mark of his career. Before being arrested in 1994 and unmasked as a traitor, he was widely regarded by his colleagues and supervisors as having (in the words of a subsequent internal report) "little focus, few recruitments, no enthusiasm, little regard for the rules and requirements, little self-discipline, little security consciousness, little respect for management or the mission, few good work habits, few friends, and a bad reputation in terms of integrity, dependability, and discretion."

Yet, despite these scathing assessments; despite his well-known habit of sleeping off his "liquid lunches" at his desk in the afternoon; and despite a "potentially very serious security violation" in which he left a suitcase full of classified documents in a New York City subway car, Ames was not only retained in the CIA's employ but was consistently promoted upward until he became chief, successively, of two branches focusing on the USSR. There he gained unfettered access to the agency's global efforts against the Soviet Union. In exchange for cash, he proceeded to betray almost every asset the CIA had in place in the USSR, an act resulting in the deaths of numerous Russians who had risked their lives to help the United States.

If the Ames case revealed a near-incomprehensible sloth in the area of personnel management, its aftermath went damagingly to the opposite extreme. Because the unthinkable had occurred, and the KGB had been allowed to penetrate the CIA's inner sanctum, the internal-security branch was unleashed to ensure there would never be a recurrence. Among other measures, polygraph testing of employees was instituted with a vengeance. Since Ames himself had managed to deceive polygraph examiners, more aggressive techniques were introduced.

The new approach, explains Mahle, entailed exposing loyal officers to hostile interrogation:

> Gone was the collegial relationship between examiner and examinee where "concerns" were discussed, with the examiner saying, "Gee, you are showing discomfort on that question . . . can you tell me why?" The post-Ames approach was "You are lying. I know you are lying. The machine shows you are lying. Admit your guilt now or your career is over."

Subjected to such grueling exams, some 400 officers flunked. Their names were then reported to the FBI for mandatory investigation, setting in motion a process that could take years to resolve. These agents, many of whom were deprived of their right to travel abroad on official business or to work with classified materials, were thrust into a limbo status and came to be known within the agency as "ghosts."

Wreaking havoc on morale, the polygraph machine also created a major bottleneck in recruitment at the very moment when the agency was facing a crippling shortage of new blood. According to Mahle, nearly three-quarters of CIA applicants are now rejected on the basis of polygraph results, a rate suggesting that an astonishingly high proportion are engaged in unacceptable levels of "immoral, criminal, or counterintelligence [i.e., potentially traitorous] behavior." In explaining this puzzling phenomenon, she offers up a crucial detail: investigators successful at "catching people who lie" during their polygraph exams are awarded bonuses.

IF THE deformities caused by the CIA's peculiar culture of internal security have taken a toll, of equal significance are intrusions of a much less discussed kind that have subtly corroded the organization's self-image and morale. The cumulative impact of these intrusions on recruitment and ultimately on performance—especially in the area of counterterrorism—may not be precisely measurable, but is undoubtedly profound.

From the start, our national spy agency was designed to operate in a radically different manner from every other government organization. How, after all, could it engage successfully in the black arts of espionage—breaking the laws of other countries, recruiting agents, stealing secrets—if it were not allowed to conduct itself, at least to some extent, outside the rules? But, in important respects, Congress, the executive branch, and the agency's own leadership have conspired over the decades to turn the CIA into a government bureaucracy like any other, its managers and employees preoccupied with endless reams of restrictive regulations and simultaneously caught up in many of the newfangled pathologies of the American workplace.

In *Denial and Deception*, Mahle identifies the "old boy network" as one important source of dysfunction. Whether or not that is so, the effort to dislodge it created another and perhaps greater problem. Though the agency had begun to recruit many more women in the 1980's and 90's, their ability to move into senior positions, writes Mahle, was limited by the "dinosaur brains" who ran the show. In 1991, a CIA-commissioned "glass ceiling" study found that women were not achieving "at the

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same pace of or [to] the same degree as men," and were receiving "proportionately fewer awards" while men were still being "given the choice assignments." The report also noted that, "in order to be accepted," female officers tolerated widespread sexual harassment.

When the Clinton administration came into power, combating sexual harassment and the "glass ceiling" became part of a much broader campaign to reconstitute the agency workforce. Mahle tells part of the story, the part about "the old boy network"; congressional documents supply the missing pieces concerning the hiring and promotion of minority candidates.

Bill Clinton's first CIA director was R. James Woolsey—who tried valiantly, and failed, to get the President to focus on the threat of terrorism in the aftermath of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. During his tenure, though, the agency announced an ambitious affirmative-action plan. Although Woolsey was careful to state that "we have not and will not set down quotas," the agency's deputy directors were required "to identify the top 50 positions in their directorates" and to collect data on "the percentage of minorities who apply, and the number selected" for those slots. Also mandated was a program aimed at preventing sexual harassment.

By 1995, under John Deutch, Clinton's second director, the effort to remake the agency in the name of "diversity" had intensified markedly. Deutch began his tenure by advancing a "strategic diversity plan" and installing a forty-year-old Pentagon official, Nora Slatkin, in the agency's executive-director slot to carry it out. Slatkin soon formed a Human Resources Oversight Council (HROC) aimed "at improving the agency's efforts to hire and provide career development for women, minorities, the deaf, and people with disabilities." The need for such measures, according to HROC, was clear from its own study of shortfalls in "recruiting, hiring, and advancement":

> [M]inorities in the agency's workforce—particularly Hispanics and Asian-Pacific employees—remain underrepresented when compared with Civilian Labor Force (CLF) guidelines determined by the 1990 census. Hispanic employees in FY 1995 accounted for 2.3 percent of the agency workforce; CLF guidelines indicate Hispanics nationwide account for 8.1 percent of the nation's workforce. Asian-Pacific employees comprised only 1.7 percent of the agency's workforce; CLF guidelines indicate Asian-Pacific minorities comprise 2.8 percent of the nation's workforce.

To reduce these statistical discrepancies, Slatkin declared "a goal that one out of every three officers hired in fiscal years 1995-97 be of Hispanic or Asian-Pacific origin." She moved no less aggressively to alter the ethnic and sexual complexion of the CIA's higher levels. In just six months, she was able to report, "42 percent of officers selected for senior assignments ha[d] been women or minorities."

Inevitably, working relationships were affected by these shifts. According to Mahle, some male officers became "very supportive of the diversity program and ma[d]e a point of mentoring female officers under their command." But there was also "a perception among some male officers that the CIA now use[d] a quota system for assignments and promotions." And this perception, she adds, was "probably true."

By 1999, the agency's top leaders were actively engaged in the campaign for greater diversity, or, in plain English, quotas. Clinton's third director, George Tenet, issued a major statement deploring the fact that "[m]inorities, women, and people with disabilities still are underrepresented in the agency's mid-level and senior officer positions," and asserting his determination to end this state of affairs. It was, he said, incumbent on "supervisors and managers" at all levels to understand that diversity is "one of the most powerful tools we have to help make the world a safer place," and he declared that they would be held accountable for "ensuring that this agency and community are inclusive institutions."

Today, after more than a decade of submission to this powerful tool, CIA employees can take pride in being part of a very inclusive institution indeed. One measure of this, as the agency itself boasts on its website, is the number of "affinity groups" it supports within its ranks. There is, for example, the Asian Pacific American Organization, which "assists in recruiting, mentoring, counseling, and monitoring the advancement of Asian American officers to insure that equity is occurring." The Black Executive Board functions to advance the "multicultural environment" and provides guidance "to senior management on all matters affecting recruiting, hiring, retention, networking, assignments, promotions, and career development opportunities." The Hispanic Advisory Council "provides input" on Hispanic issues, while the Native American Council serves as "a champion of

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diversity in the [CIA] workplace." There is also ANGLE, the Agency Network for Gay and Lesbian Employees, which is "geared toward fostering the principles of diversity and creating opportunities" for the agency's "gay, lesbian, bisexual, and trans-gendered employees."

These, then, have been the fruits of an effort going back well over a decade and consuming a large quotient of the agency's senior-level attention—the same period in which al Qaeda was gathering force and training thousands of Islamists, and when the CIA's overriding need, conspicuously unmet all those years, was the hiring of more officers capable of speaking and reading Arabic.*

THE MISPLACED internal obsessions of the CIA are rightly an issue of major concern. But fully to grasp the difficulties enveloping the agency, one must enter into an area that the 9/11 Commission, perhaps in order to retain its façade of bipartisan comity, was at pains to avoid—namely, the political dimension of things.

To put the matter at its simplest, American elites have become increasingly discomfited over the last decades by the very *existence* of a clandestine intelligence service in a democratic society. Beginning with the Church Committee hearings in the aftermath of the Vietnam war, and with the collapse of the anti-Communist consensus, the CIA has thus come under regular assault from both Congress and the media for real and alleged transgressions of its mandate. At times, the White House has weighed in with strictures (and purges) of its own.

The net effect has been to create a climate inside the agency in which employees at all levels, and particularly in management positions, have become fearful of aggressively performing their jobs. After all, the price of stepping over the line in the service of one's country could now mean not only the end of one's career but being hauled before a congressional committee or, as happened in the Iran-*contra* fiasco, indicted by a criminal court.

A salient victim of this ultra-cautious mood has been counterterrorism. In 1996, the agency established an Osama bin Laden "issue group" within its counterterrorism center. According to Mahle, the unit was considered a bureaucratic Siberia by those on the agency fast track and was left "critically short of experienced analysts." It was also presided over by a less than sterling mind: Michael Scheuer. Only in 1998, after al Qaeda had blown up U.S. embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, and after bin Laden had issued a second *fatwa* (a first in 1996 had been largely ignored) urging all Muslims "to kill the Americans and their allies, civilians and military," was the CIA goaded into action—if action is the proper word.

After the embassy bombings, Mahle recounts, George Tenet "declared war against bin Laden. He really did. Those words came out of his mouth—multiple times." But, she goes on, it was not really a war at all. Instead, the CIA, "which typically operates in crisis-management mode, just added one more crisis to the pile." Between 1998 and 2000, only three officers were focused exclusively on al Qaeda. Beginning in 2000 the number was increased to five.† And this was evidently the way Tenet liked it, for "if CIA management wanted a fully staffed, powerhouse counterterrorism center," notes Mahle, "all it had to do was speak."

Tenet's aversion to effective action against al Qaeda is not all that difficult to comprehend. As Mahle (a self-acknowledged Clinton voter) emphasizes, Tenet was working in the service of an administration that was itself risk-averse, that regarded foreign policy as a distraction, and that therefore considered the CIA "potentially dangerous to the White House and need[ing] to be controlled tightly, kept on a very short leash." A political creature to his core, Tenet was bent on keeping "CIA activities within Clinton's comfort zone."

But if Tenet was "successful in not getting caught out in front of Clinton," he was also successful in "not getting out in front of rapidly emerging terrorist threats." Typical was the way in which the CIA pursued bin Laden in the late 1990's. Although the agency was operating under a government-wide ban (imposed in the Reagan era) on participating in assassinations, the ban had now come to be construed by CIA higher-ups in the most stringent form imaginable. An operation had to be immediately halted, writes Mahle, if CIA lawyers "caught a whiff of anything that could be interpreted on the most liberal basis as practicing assassination, condoning assassination, or assisting indirectly in assassination." Indeed, the agency even concluded it had a "duty to warn" individuals who were targets of assassination, leading to "absurd situations" in which it found itself firing agents it itself had hired to eliminate terrorists and

* According to the report of the joint congressional inquiry into September 11, "the intelligence community was not prepared to handle the challenge it faced in translating the volumes of foreign-language counterterrorism intelligence it collected," and was at "a readiness level of only 30 percent in the most critical terrorism-related languages used by terrorists."

† These are Mahle's numbers; congressional documents offer several different figures. The still-classified CIA IG report may resolve the matter.

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alerting "its own enemies" of threats against them.

One such absurd situation, as we learn from the 9/11 Commission report, occurred in 1998, when CIA officers in the field developed a well-formulated plan to ambush and capture Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan as he traveled between Kandahar and his terrorist training facilities at Tarnak Farms. Though the agents judged the plan to be highly promising, headquarters was discomfited. In the words of the 9/11 Commission, the proposed operation "brought to the surface an unease about paramilitary covert action that had become ingrained." One senior manager "expressed concern that people might get killed."

Not long afterward, the operation was called off. As a result, people did get killed—thousands of them—and not on the road from Kandahar but in lower Manhattan, at the Pentagon, and in rural Pennsylvania.

The CIA is an organization that grew out of the American role in extinguishing the military conflagration that swept the world beginning in 1939. Its roots lie in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), a wartime intelligence unit that truly did draw upon some of our country's best and brightest, accomplishing, with scarce resources and often under desperate conditions, heroic feats of action and analysis. The establishment of the CIA in 1947 was based upon a recognition that in the atomic age, and with the rise of a nuclear-armed Communist adversary, another surprise attack like Pearl Harbor could not be allowed to happen.

Across five decades, the CIA performed its intelligence mission with varying degrees of proficiency and success. It had its major operational debacles, as in the Bay of Pigs, and its no less significant analytical failures, as in its persistent misestimates of the size and composition of the Soviet economy. It also accomplished awe-inspiring deeds, including the development of the U-2 spy aircraft and the recruitment of a number of highly placed Communist-bloc spies. Yet increasingly, as the cold war wore on, and in its aftermath, the agency went downhill.

The Clinton administration greatly accelerated this process, not only by sharply cutting the CIA's budget but also by reining in almost all risk-taking operations and browbeating the agency into becoming a showcase for the Clintonian brand of affirmative action. And showcase is the right word: if the CIA typically shrouds itself in secrecy, when it comes to racial and gender preferences, few government agencies have made their internal workings quite so visible. The drive to hire more "Asian-Pacific" and Hispanic officers at the very moment the CIA was facing a critical shortage of Arabic speakers, and at the very moment when Islamic terrorism was emerging as the most significant threat to our national security, speaks volumes about how and why the agency failed in its mission of safeguarding the United States.

Just as there is no single cause of the CIA's manifold shortcomings, however, so there is no single solution that can put things right. The United States is today once again at war, and contrary to the CIA's leading expert on Osama bin Laden, we are facing not a "gentle" adversary but one that has already demonstrated its capacity to murder large numbers of us. In this war, intelligence is the most important front—which means that fixing the CIA or, if it cannot be fixed, replacing it with something different and better, remains the government's most pressing task. Unfortunately, grafting a new layer of bureaucracy on top of what exists, as Congress has just done, does not even begin to grapple with the real weaknesses of the present system.

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Social Security Then and Now

Bruce Bartlett

BY ALL accounts, Social Security is the most successful domestic government program in American history. This year, more than $500 billion will be relatively costlessly taken from the pockets of American workers and transferred to those living in retirement. As a consequence of this program, the poverty rate among the elderly has fallen sharply over the last 65 years, and young people have largely been relieved of the burdensome responsibility of caring for their parents and grandparents in old age.

Yet, as almost everyone agrees, this model program is itself showing signs of old age. By 2018, revenues from Social Security taxes will no longer be sufficient to pay Social Security benefits. As President Bush pointed out in his State of the Union address, the number of workers supporting each retiree has fallen from 16 in 1950 to just 3.3 today, and those entering the labor force will get an infinitesimally smaller return on their contributions than did earlier generations.

The President has decided to make reform of this system a centerpiece of his second-term agenda. While there is as yet no detailed proposal for doing so, he has made it clear that personal accounts—along the lines of the popular 401(k) accounts commonly available to workers today—will be key to the plan. Basically, younger workers will be expected to give up some portion of their future Social Security benefits in exchange for such accounts, the return from which will compensate them for the lost benefits.

Understanding precisely how Social Security was developed, why certain features have been central to its operation, and how people may react to changes in the system will be critical to the success or failure of the Bush initiative. Following is a brief survey of some of the issues.

SINCE TIME immemorial, societies have had systems to care for the aged who were no longer able to work to support themselves. The foundation of these arrangements has been the family: until recently, the main method of providing for one's old age was to have as many children as possible. But even in ancient times, annuities were available to allow people to save specifically for retirement.

With an annuity, one pays a lump sum in return for specified payments for the balance of one's life. Records of annuities exist from ancient India, China, Babylon, Egypt, and Rome. In the Middle Ages, governments often sold annuities as a way of financing wars. Today, annuities are widely available through employers or can be purchased by individuals with funds that may have been saved through an Individual Retirement Account or a 401(k) plan.

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Eventually, fraternal societies and guilds took on some of the responsibilities of caring for their aged members. According to the historian David Beito, on the eve of the Great Depression as many as 35 million Americans belonged to fraternal societies, many of which catered to immigrants and minorities and often provided full health and life insurance for their members. Some even owned hospitals.

Businesses also played an important role in providing for the elderly. For example, older workers were sometimes graduated into token jobs or given a stipend. As early as 1882, the Alfred Dolge company, a builder of musical instruments, had instituted a formal pension plan, withholding 1 percent of its workers' pay and adding 6-percent interest each year.

The Great Depression effectively ended the role of fraternal societies in the provision of social welfare. It also put an enormous strain on businesses, many of which terminated their pension plans. It was therefore inevitable that the federal government, which had already begun to provide pensions to veterans of wars and their families, would be forced to undertake this task. What was not at all inevitable was that the Social Security system would develop the way it did. Its precise form is mainly due to the vision of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Roosevelt's chief political concern in his first term was the challenge from his Left. The Socialist candidate Norman Thomas had received almost a million votes in 1932, and populist demagogues like Huey Long and Francis Townsend were achieving wide popularity with their calls for massive income redistribution—far more than a capitalist economy could tolerate. With the rise of Communism in Russia (and National Socialism in Germany), Roosevelt was rightly concerned that failure to deal with social pressures here could lead to revolution.

Roosevelt's strategy was to institute modest liberal reforms accompanied by a few radical flourishes and rhetoric for effect. In this respect, he anticipated Bill Clinton's triangulation strategy, satisfying his liberal constituency mostly with words while the substance of his policies was much more conservative than is generally appreciated even today.

Concerning Social Security, Roosevelt faced strong pressure to institute a program that would be paid immediately out of general revenues. This would have been much more progressive and perhaps better for the economy at the time. Roosevelt, however, was adamant that he was not going to enact a welfare program but a funded system in which workers would have to earn their pension. Indeed, he chose just about the most conservative financing scheme possible, one that was strenuously opposed by the Left as being deeply regressive.

At the same time, it is clear that Roosevelt was at least as concerned with tying workers to the state as with helping them achieve a secure old age. This is proved by his strenuous efforts to kill a Senate plan that would have privatized the system right from the beginning. An amendment sponsored by Democratic Senator Bennett Champ Clark would have allowed workers to opt out of Social Security if their employers provided an annuity with benefits at least equal to those of the federal program. Although the amendment passed the Democratically-controlled Senate by a healthy margin, Roosevelt pressured the House to reject it in conference. In the end, the Clark amendment was dropped, killing the last serious effort to create a private alternative to the government-run system.

The original tax rate imposed by the Social Security legislation in 1935 was 1 percent of the first $3,000 of wages on both employer and employee, for a total of 2 percent. (Economists generally believe that in fact the employee pays the whole tax, in the form of lower wages.) Everyone, regardless of income, would pay at the same rate—in effect, a flat tax on a broad base with no exemptions whatsoever.

Taxes were first collected in 1937, but benefits would not be paid until 1940. Although he was criticized by Keynesian economists, who saw this initial build-up of Social Security surpluses as depressing consumer spending, Roosevelt again held firm: he saw the creation of a trust fund as essential to making Social Security look as much as possible like a private pension.

There was a political calculation here as well: tying contributions and benefits together would guarantee the long-term viability of the system and protect it forever against political attack. As he told a doubting adviser, "We put those payroll contributions there so as to give the contributors a legal, moral, and political right to collect their pensions and their unemployment benefits. With those taxes in there, no damn politician can ever scrap my Social Security program."

Roosevelt was correct on the politics and better on the economics than many believed. The tight linkage between taxes paid and benefits received has ensured that workers tend to regard Social Se-

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curity in the same light in which they regard private pensions. That is, they look upon payroll taxes as forced saving, akin to deductions for health insurance or 401(k) contributions, and not as a true tax for which nothing specific is received.

Critics still charge the Social Security tax with regressivity, but in doing so they overlook the nature of the benefit structure. True, low-income workers pay a greater percentage of their income in payroll taxes than do those with high incomes, but they also get much larger benefits relative to their contributions. On balance, the system—benefits and taxes taken together—is highly progressive.

This progressivity was especially pronounced in the early years of the program, when benefits were paid out to people who had paid virtually nothing in. The classic example is Ida May Fuller, the first person to draw retirement benefits. She paid a total of $24.75 into the system between 1937 and 1940, when she retired, drawing benefits from that point until her death in 1975 at the age of a hundred. Over the years, she received $22,888.92 from Social Security, an impressive return.

While few retirees did so well as Fuller, it is nevertheless the case that most have historically registered a very good return on their Social Security taxes. As recently as 1980, according to the Congressional Research Service (CRS), the average worker got back all of his and his employer's Social Security taxes in the form of benefits in just 2.8 years of retirement, and when he began to draw Social Security at age sixty-five, he received monthly benefits equal to almost half his pre-retirement monthly wage.

As the years have gone by, however, this rate of return has fallen sharply. The reasons are simple. More and more retirees have paid into the system during their entire working lives, and are thus not in a position to reap the benefits of Ida May Fuller and other early retirees. Also, both the tax rates and the wage base have risen steadily over the years. Today, the tax rate for Social Security's retirement program is 5.3 percent on workers and employers on all wages up to $90,000. Additional taxes for disability insurance and Medicare put the total payroll tax rate at 15.3 percent.

As a result, in 2000 it took a low-income worker 11.8 years to get back all of his and his employer's Social Security taxes in the form of benefits, while an average worker needed 17.5 years and a high-income worker 24.9 years. Absent any changes to the system, this return will continue to deteriorate. By 2030, the CRS estimates that it will take a low-income worker 14.1 years to recover his contributions, an average worker 25.6 years, and a high-income worker 55 years.

Meanwhile, Social Security's long-term finances are becoming increasingly precarious. This would be self-evident were it not for the existence of the trust fund, which, on paper, has sufficient assets to continue paying full benefits well after 2018, the point at which payroll taxes will be insufficient to pay current benefits.

The problem here is that the trust fund is and always has been invested only in U.S. Treasury securities. In effect, the government simply lends money to itself, using payroll taxes in excess of current benefits to fund general government programs. This does not amount to stealing, as is sometimes charged, but it does nothing to reduce the economic burden of Social Security.

The trust fund is best thought of as budget authority: legal permission to spend general revenues to pay Social Security benefits, which will become a growing necessity after 2018. If the Treasury simply created $10 trillion of new bonds out of thin air and deposited them in the trust fund, the effect would be only to extend the federal government's legal ability to use general revenues to pay benefits.

This is not to say that the apocalypse will occur on the day the trust fund runs dry—a day now estimated to fall in the year 2042. Even if this were a looming threat, it would take Congress only a matter of hours to pass legislation providing for general-revenue financing of any shortfall in payroll taxes and trust-fund assets to cover promised benefits. The true guarantee of Social Security benefits is not the existence of a trust fund or words on a piece of paper but the overwhelming necessity of providing for the elderly—plus the continued ability of the government to take sufficient revenues out of the economy to finance those benefits.

The real question, therefore, is whether we can afford the benefits that have been promised. Under the Congressional Budget Office's long-term projections, Social Security spending will rise by 2 percent of the gross domestic product annually between 2010 and 2050. While large, this is not a tremendous economic burden to meet—roughly equivalent to increasing the payroll tax rate by 1 percent each on employer and employee, for a new combined rate of 17.3 percent.*

* This is still well below the rate in many other countries. Italy, for example, has a rate just for retirement and disability programs of 32.7 percent, and a total payroll tax rate of 41.1 percent.

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Unfortunately, though, the idea that a 2-percent tax increase is all we need to fix Social Security in perpetuity ignores deteriorating demographic trends that will make the burden much greater in the future than it is today. Because of declining birth rates and the aging of the giant baby-boom generation, the number of workers per retiree will continue to decline. One way to quantify this effect is by looking at those receiving Social Security as a percentage of those paying the taxes. This "dependency ratio" is projected to rise from 30 percent today to 54 percent in 2080.

Because of growing life expectancy, moreover, these estimates are likely to prove optimistic. In 1960, a sixty-five-year-old male could anticipate living another 13.2 years and a female 17.4 years. By 2003, a man of sixty-five could look forward to an additional 16.7 years and a woman to 19.5 years. Improving medical technology may sharply increase these figures even well beyond those now projected for 2080, when it is currently estimated that a sixty-five-year-old man will live another 21.1 years and a woman another 23.7 years.

Another problem: projections tend to ignore the fact that few workers today bother to wait until the normal retirement age before drawing their benefits. In 2002, 56.1 percent of those eligible began taking benefits at age sixty-two, and another 22.7 percent started before sixty-five. The critical issue here is not the outflow of payments, since those retiring early begin with an actuarially lower benefit—currently about 20 percent less than they would get at the normal retirement age. The issue, rather, is the economic impact of a regulation that severely limits how much wage income one may earn after retirement without losing Social Security benefits. Those below the normal retirement age lose $1 of benefits for every $2 earned above $12,000—the equivalent of a 50-percent marginal tax rate that pushes substantial numbers of otherwise productive people out of the labor force.

This brings us to the debate over personal accounts. One strong argument *for* such accounts is that they will give older workers an incentive to stay in the labor force rather than ceasing work at the earliest opportunity. Many now take early retirement because of a use-it-or-lose-it mentality and because benefits generally cannot be willed to heirs. With personal accounts, however, workers in effect capitalize some of their Social Security benefits and will have unlimited freedom to leave this asset to whomever they please.

Indeed, one of the principal, unheralded advantages of replacing some of Social Security with personal accounts will be to expand the supply of workers in their mid-sixties. At a time of an acute national shortage of experienced and well-educated workers, this will be a plus both for society and for many workers themselves. In the 1930's, when life spans were shorter and more people held physically demanding jobs, full cessation of work at age sixty-five was justifiable (and may have seemed a prudent way to help open up vacancies for younger workers). Today, with increasing life spans, improvements in nutrition and medicine, and more comfortable working conditions, the idea that people should totally cease work in their mid-sixties is increasingly out of date. People of this age today are likely to be in better physical shape than their parents were in their forties, and many have found that retirement at age sixty-five, with the accompanying loss of a sense of purpose in their lives, is both emotionally and physically harmful.

But are workers likely to welcome the inevitable risks that go with personal accounts? The critics are doubtful, but their doubts are belied by what we know about 401(k) accounts, which were first authorized in 1978. These accounts did not replace defined benefit plans, which like Social Security pay a fixed sum to retirees for life. But both workers and employers have taken with such alacrity to the 401(k) that it has gradually displaced traditional pension plans.

Our experience with 401(k) and other such defined-contribution plans suggests that workers enjoy knowing the capital value of their retirement savings and having the freedom to invest those funds as they see fit. They also like the flexibility to set both the date of their retirement and the form of their retirement income, rather than being tied to an arbitrary arrangement.

Can workers expect a high enough return on personal accounts to compensate fully for the fixed benefits they will be ceding? The Social Security Reform Commission concluded that a real (inflation-adjusted) return of 2 percent per year would be sufficient to break even. Historically, a broad portfolio of common stocks has returned (according to the economist Jeremy Siegel) 7 percent per year on average. While one can always find some isolated period in which this was not the case, most economists believe that the risks essentially disappear over a reasonable span of time—say, 20 years.

A more important question about personal accounts has to do with the macroeconomic impact of the loss of a steady source of payroll-tax revenue to the government. If the Treasury ends up cover-

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ing that loss by borrowing, then the government's negative saving will exactly offset the new private saving, leaving nothing for additional investment. Therefore, it is essential that personal accounts not be financed solely through higher budget deficits.

Cutting government spending could accomplish this end, but with the budget already running a large deficit, it will be very hard to find another $1 to $2 trillion in cuts over the next couple of decades to cover the loss to the Social Security trust fund. Conceivably, taxes could be raised, but one of the main reasons for reforming Social Security in the first place is to avoid a large tax increase, which would anyway tend to depress private saving and investment and thus reduce economic growth still further.

Consequently, it may be necessary to consider other reforms. In 1983, a Democratic Congress initiated a rise in the normal retirement age from sixty-five to sixty-seven, even though neither the Greenspan commission nor the Reagan administration had recommended it. One suggestion now would be to phase in a further increase beyond sixty-seven to keep pace with rising life expectancy. For a number of reasons, this may be the easiest long-term solution that could be enacted: raising the retirement age clearly would have no effect on current retirees or on those nearing retirement, who would be exempted from any such provision, and so could avoid arousing the most vocal group of potential opponents.

Another proposal would be to change the Social Security payment formula so that it no longer raises real benefits annually. This happens because benefits are indexed to wages, which normally rise faster than inflation; indexing them to prices instead would almost entirely finance the transition to personal accounts, while still giving future retirees the same benefits that today's retirees get in real terms. They just won't get more.*

FINALLY, THERE is the partisan political dimension of the issue. Some Republicans in Congress are deeply fearful of tinkering with Social Security lest highly organized elderly voters penalize them at the polls. That is unlikely to happen, however. As we saw when the retirement age was raised, the elderly are mainly concerned with their benefits today, and historically have not strongly resisted cuts in benefits that only affect retirees in the distant future.

Although AARP, the principal lobbying group for the elderly, has declared war on any effort to replace any part of Social Security with personal accounts, the organization may be more of a paper tiger than it used to be. Its year-in, year-out attacks on Republicans for trying to destroy Social Security have taken on a boy-who-cried-wolf quality that many of its own members no longer respond to. Moreover, with many AARP members living comfortably off 401(k) plans, Individual Retirement Accounts, and Keogh plans, the prospect of adding personal accounts to Social Security is not likely to frighten people the way it may have done 25 years ago. Then, too, the recent spate of reports about corporate pension plans going belly-up has had the effect of lessening the sense of riskiness attending other proposed schemes, especially ones that promise greater personal control over one's own money.

As for Democrats and liberals, some of them have never really opposed privatizing some of Social Security, at least in principle—and at least when they themselves have been in office. Bill Clinton, for one, conceded the desirability of privatization, although he differed with Republicans on how to go about it. A compromise plan could easily have been financed with the budget surpluses that emerged in 1998, and if the Monica Lewinsky scandal had not intervened, Clinton might well have ended up with the historical legacy he so badly craved.

In any event, the strenuous opposition now being mounted by Democrats has more to do with tactics than with conviction. The Democrats intend to bargain from the strongest position possible, which at the moment translates into straightforward resistance and obstructionism. There will be plenty of time later on to establish, if necessary, a floor for negotiations.

Where conviction enters the calculus is over the question of the proper role of government in people's lives. Republicans want to wean people away from the state; turning workers into investors, to the greatest extent possible, is one way of accomplishing that goal. Democrats have a different governing philosophy, and a deep political worry. The more that American voters become sympathetic to the Republican message of personal responsibility and limited government, the greater will be the peril to the long-term prospects of the Democratic party in its current incarnation.

With the political stakes so high, it is little wonder that Bush's opponents have declined to focus on the simple question of whether personal accounts are an appropriate addition to our current system—especially because they are.

* This would not affect cost-of-living increases in post-retirement benefits.

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Observations

Will the Real Shakespeare Please Stand Up?

John Gross

Anyone setting out to write a biography of Shakespeare has to weigh two considerations against each other. On the one hand, we do not know all that much about him. On the other hand, we know a great deal. There are no diaries, letters, memoirs, or interviews; most of the surviving documentation is dry and impersonal; major aspects of his life remain a blank. But we do have the plays and the poems—how can they fail to bring us close to the man who wrote them?—and we can build on the knowledge, bequeathed by generations of scholars, of the society in which he lived and moved.

Given the available evidence, or lack of it, any attempt at a full-length portrait of Shakespeare is bound to involve an exceptional amount of speculation. Even the most cautious biography, once it starts exploring his personality, can hardly help taking on some of the characteristics of a novel. The only alternative—sticking to the established facts and gaps—is, however, arguably more useful. No one did more for the study of Shakespeare's life in the 20th century than E.K. Chambers in Britain and Samuel Schoenbaum in America. But neither of them wrote a biography (although Schoenbaum had hoped to). Chambers confined himself to *William Shakespeare: A Study in Facts and Problems* (1930). Schoenbaum distilled his learning into *William Shakespeare: A Documentary Life* (1975) and various associated volumes.

Meanwhile, there has been a steady procession of popular biographies and general studies that mix narrative and criticism. If anything, the rate at which they have been appearing has increased in recent years. Park Honan's 1998 biography is one outstanding example, and now Stephen Greenblatt has entered the lists with a study offering an account (much of it hypothetical) of Shakespeare's outward career, but focusing principally on his inner life.

Greenblatt's *Will in the World** comes festooned with tributes from eminent persons that are lavish even by the prevailing standards in such things. It has received exceptionally wide coverage in the press; the *New Yorker* has paid homage; a chunk has been excerpted by the *New York Times*. None of this is to be wondered at. Greenblatt, a professor at Harvard, is one of the big beasts of the contemporary academic jungle; I have seen him described in a leading English newspaper as "the world's most influential Shakespearean for a quarter of a century."

But not everyone is convinced, and some readers, mindful of his earlier work, were looking forward to the new book with apprehension. Greenblatt is indelibly associated with "the new historicism" (he coined the name himself), a movement or method that not only seeks to relate literary works to their historical context but also presents them as essentially the products of that context. Filling the void left by the decline of Marxism, the new historicists—I quote from *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare*—study "both the meaning and the function of the work as an element in a larger matrix of social power."

* Norton, 386 pp., $26.95.

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Greenblatt has been accused by more traditional scholars of making unfounded assertions and distorting or misinterpreting the evidence. There is a devastating account of some of the slippery arguments he employs in a recent book by Tom McAlindon, *Shakespeare Minus "Theory"* (2004). But, important though these charges are, they are secondary considerations. Ultimately and most significantly, the new historicism is a political movement. Greenblatt himself has been quite explicit about its origins: the new historicism "was decisively shaped," he wrote in 1990, "by the American 1960's and early 70's, and especially by the opposition to the Vietnam war."

Following from this, Greenblatt sees the role of criticism as one of perpetual protest, in which literary texts are used to undermine existing authority. Whether the critic is supposed to conduct his attack in the name of an *alternative* form of authority is a side issue; it is enough if he exposes the malign power structures of the past, either as images of our own forms of social oppression or as sources from which our current forms derive—as, in Greenblatt's words, "the generative forces that led to the modern condition."

A BIOGRAPHY of Shakespeare that attempted to follow such an agenda would be an unappetizing prospect. It would subject the poet at every turn to modern political judgments, and thrust him into an ideological straitjacket. In this respect, *Will in the World* turns out to be a pleasant surprise. It celebrates Shakespeare's achievements in their own right. It explores his personal experience as just that, not as the local habitation of larger historical forces. Its approach could reasonably be described—and commended—as rather old-fashioned.

In fact, if this book were all you knew of Greenblatt's work, it would be almost impossible to deduce from it some of the sentiments he has expressed in his earlier writings. Take his treatment of Prince Hal in *Henry IV*. Few readers feel completely comfortable with this prince, whose habits of cold calculation, even if we accept the need for them in a future ruler, are unendearing. But Greenblatt has gone much further. His attack on Hal in *Shakespearean Negotiations* (1988) refused to grant him any positive qualities whatsoever. Hal is "the prince and principle of falsification," wrote Greenblatt. Everything he touches "turns to dross."

Virtually none of this condemnation finds its way into *Will in the World*, where Hal's actions are alluded to in matter-of-fact tones. Although one of his double-edged responses to Falstaff is described as "chilling" (which it is), Greenblatt is principally interested in him as a partial embodiment of Shakespeare himself—first in relation to the poet's own father (a heavy drinker, Greenblatt suggests, and perhaps also a bit of a Falstaff), and second in relation to the "University Wits," the gifted, reckless, hard-living older dramatists from whom Shakespeare learned a great deal but from whose self-destructive world he knew how to extricate himself. "In Prince Hal," Greenblatt writes,

> the author of the *Henry IV* plays saw himself, projecting onto his character a blend of experimental participation and careful, self-protective distance; recognizing the functional utility of his tavern lessons in language-games and in role-playing, and unsentimentally accepting the charge of calculated self-interest.

A biographer's frame of reference is, to be sure, not the same as that of a critic. In principle there is no reason why Hal should not do double duty as the young Shakespeare turning everything to gold and as a treacherous aspiring autocrat turning everything to dross. But in practice, I think, anyone who starts off with Greenblatt's account of the prince in *Will in the World* would find it hard to switch unquestioningly to the earlier image of a royal gangster. At the very least, the biography points the way to a more open reading of the play, one that would allow for Hal's virtues as well as his vices.

ANOTHER CASE worth considering in this light is Greenblatt's treatment of *The Tempest*. No Shakespearean play has suffered as much as this one in recent years from having a political reading imposed on it. In the face of most of the facts, it has become more or less standard practice to interpret *The Tempest* as an allegory of European colonialism. Greenblatt went along with this view in a 1990 essay, "Learning to Curse," in which he presented Prospero, the exiled duke ruling over an island of which he has taken possession, as an archetypal oppressor—and one of whom, regrettably, Shakespeare approved. In this reading, the brutish Caliban is of course the play's hero.

In *Will in the World*, however, these notions have been left behind. Greenblatt writes a great deal about *The Tempest* in this biography, but the play is rightly seen as gathering up preoccupations that recur throughout Shakespeare's work—"the story of brother betraying brother," "the dream of restoration," the manipulative power of art, and others. Although at one point in the discussion the colonial parallel does resurface—according to Greenblatt, the realm that Prospero rules by magic is partly modeled on "one of the islands encountered by European voyagers to the New World," where, "for those in command, anything was possible"—he does not dwell on the idea. Rather, he suggests that the poet found a more powerful model in a different world where anything was possible: the theater. And if there is a theme here that corresponds to the poet's circumstances at the time he wrote the play, it is that of retirement—the voluntary retirement of a master who is still in his prime. *The Tempest*,

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says Greenblatt, "is a play not about possessing absolute power but about giving it up."

In brief, Greenblatt may not have abandoned his new-historicist beliefs while writing *Will in the World*, but at least he has kept them in abeyance. Possibly he felt it would have been inappropriate to make too much of them in a book aimed at a more popular audience than the one he is accustomed to addressing in his academic work. But the energy of his narrative suggests that he welcomes the role of story-teller. And in that role, he does speculate freely. Even while acknowledging his debt to Chambers, Schoenbaum, and other exemplars of cautious scholarship, he frequently lets his imagination run ahead of the facts.

SOME OF Greenblatt's surmises are more persuasive than others. When you are dealing with guesswork, reactions are bound to be heavily subjective, but personally I am won over by his treatment of Shakespeare's marriage to Anne Hathaway. Relying partly on negative documentary evidence—the long absences, the signs of affection that aren't there—and partly on attitudes to marriage in the plays themselves, he concludes that it was an unhappy match. The story is summed up in a chapter titled "Wooing, Wedding, and Repenting."

This conclusion is itself hardly new. It has been expressed many times, most noisily by the notorious sexual braggart and con man Frank Harris in *The Man Shakespeare* (1909). Greenblatt's own conjectural account of the marriage is far more nuanced than Harris's, and far better informed, but he does let us know that he has borrowed an idea from Harris—namely, "the suggestion that the curse [carved on the poet's gravestone] on the person who moves his bones was Shakespeare's way of keeping his wife from being laid, at her death, by his side." I never thought I would live to see *The Man Shakespeare* cited as a source in a serious modern book, and I admire Greenblatt for doing so: the fact that Harris was a charlatan does not mean that he was always wrong.

An even more prominent theme than marriage in *Will in the World* is Catholicism. The notion of Shakespeare as a crypto-Catholic, which also goes back a long way, has excited increased interest in recent years. In particular, there has been speculation that as a young man he worked as a tutor in the household of a wealthy Catholic family in Lancashire, at a time when the celebrated Jesuit emissary and subsequent martyr Edmund Campion visited the region. Many scholars remain unconvinced about the whole question of his supposed Catholic affiliations, but in accepting the possibility Greenblatt is in respectable company.

But he pushes surmise too far, allowing himself to imagine the young Shakespeare meeting Campion, kneeling at his feet, registering both admiration and "a powerful inner resistance." Later, Greenblatt comes close to talking about the meeting as though it were an established fact. He speculates on Shakespeare's unproven links with underground Catholic activities, which would have been extremely dangerous, and then asks us to see his anxious need to distance himself from these activities as one of the keys to his adult personality: the young man who had played with fire learned to be cautious and discreet.

It may be so, but there is far more evidence to suggest that Shakespeare (insofar as he was religious at all) was a sincere Protestant. The scenes in which Greenblatt portrays him as a Catholic are among the most novelistic in the book, to the point where you wonder why he is so attracted by the idea; you cannot help feeling that it is above all because it makes Shakespeare an outsider, someone at odds with the predominant Elizabethan order.

At the same time, curiously, Greenblatt has little to say about the poet's political beliefs. *Troilus and Cressida*, an important play in this respect, rates not even a mention. There are lesser gaps, too. New Place, the house in Stratford that Shakespeare acquired in the 1590's, had links with two murders involving former owners, one of them the man from whom he bought it. It is odd that Greenblatt passes over both incidents in silence.

As against this, however, he works in some rewarding details neglected by earlier biographers, and he makes imaginative connections—between *Hamlet* and the death of Shakespeare's son Hamnet, for instance; or between a pageant the poet may have been taken to see as a child and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. However debatable many of these details, the cumulative picture is convincing as far as it goes. If we feel at the end that the real Shakespeare still eludes us, that he is forever disappearing around the corner, that is true of all Shakespeare biographies—and part of the perpetual fascination.

WHERE STEPHEN Greenblatt offers us a view of the life, his Harvard colleague Marjorie Garber gives us the works. Her new book, *Shakespeare After All*,* surveys the entire dramatic oeuvre, one play at a time, in chronological order. The exercise runs to a thousand pages.

If Greenblatt is a celebrated practitioner of the new historicism, Garber is a celebrated practitioner of psychocriticism. Mixing Freud, Lacan, the approach known as critical theory, and her own intuitions, she has come up with interpretations that often seem only loosely tethered to the texts she examines. Along with a half-dozen volumes of literary commentary, much of it on Shakespeare, her books include *Vested Interests* (1991), a study of "cross-dressing and cultural anxiety," and *Dog Love* (1996), in which she addresses the question: "Is canophilia an erotics of dominance?"

For anyone coming to it from

* Pantheon, 1,008 pp., $40.00.

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Garber's earlier Shakespearean writings, the most striking thing about *Shakespeare After All* is its comparative sobriety. The extravagances are still there, but they have been toned down. Much of what she says could even be called commonsensical.

Her treatment of *Macbeth* is an example. In the chapter she devoted to it in *Shakespeare's Ghost Writers* (1987), the play is anatomized (on the basis of a single reference to the Gorgon) in terms of a hypothetical "Medusa complex," with sexual ramifications as entangled as the snakes in Medusa's hair. By contrast, the section on *Macbeth* in her new book is largely grounded in what Shakespeare actually wrote. The discussion of the theme of doubleness is particularly helpful.

BUT THIS is not to say that if you search *Shakespeare After All* for classic Garberisms you will have much trouble finding them. When, for instance, Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* laments that his daughter Jessica has stolen his diamonds—"she hath the stones upon her"—Garber is quick to point out that "stones" was once a slang term for testicles. But that does not mean the secondary meaning is necessarily present on this occasion: sometimes a cigar is just a cigar. And even if one accepts that it may be, one is likely to balk at Garber's summing-up of what is happening here: "Shylock's phrase inadvertently makes Jessica into a phallic woman."

Garber's fancy runs wilder in some sections of the book than in others. She finds the possibilities opened up by *Twelfth Night*, that classic of cross-dressing and gender-switching, irresistible. We are asked to believe, for example, that "Cesario," the name adopted by the young Viola when she passes herself off as a boy, is linked—via the Latin verb *caedere*—with "cut," a bawdy Elizabethan term (alluded to elsewhere in the play) for a woman's genitals. Even the relatively restrained account of *Macbeth* has its loopier moments. Bent on the murder of Duncan, Macbeth imagines himself moving toward his design "with Tarquin's ravishing strides"; the effect of this image is, we are told, to feminize Duncan.

Mostly, though, the book avoids such excesses—often in favor of others. Much of it reads as though originally aimed at an audience of students, for whom the author had decided that a simpler approach than usual was called for. Too simple, sometimes. Elementary points are labored. Fashionable opinions are trotted out as though for the first time (how the spirit sinks to be told yet again that the plays of Samuel Beckett, when they first appeared, "seemed to rewrite *King Lear* in a new idiom"). And there is a regrettable willingness to play to the gallery, to try to hold the attention by means of comparisons or corny colloquialisms that readers can, as the saying goes, "relate to."

Take Volumnia, the mother of Coriolanus in the play of the same name. Does it really help to be told that she is "a cross between political matriarch and stage mother (Rose Kennedy and Mama Rose in the musical *Gypsy*)"? In case we need further reassurance that Volumnia is a remarkable figure, she is also described as "a fabulous dramatic *character*, a part to die for."

And then there is poor Rosalind in *As You Like It*. Helplessly in love with Orlando, but disguised from him in the clothing of a boy, she turns in despair to her cousin Celia and sighs, "Alas the day, what shall I do with my doublet and hose?" Garber's response is to wonder why Celia doesn't advise her, "in the immortal words of burlesque and striptease, to 'take it off.'" Perhaps Celia's mother was a bit like Mama Rose, too.

Underlying Garber's whole enterprise in *Shakespeare After All* is her conviction, proclaimed in the very first sentence, that "every age creates its own Shakespeare." In some ways this is unarguable, but it is a truth that has been used to license any number of perverse critical interpretations and debased theatrical productions. Although we cannot transcend our own time, we are free to choose from among its possibilities; and those possibilities include a decent respect for the past and a reluctance to stray far—at least not too often and not without good cause—from what the plays were saying before us and will go on saying after us.

Garber gives many signs of knowing this, but in practice she seems willing to extend a welcome to just about any novelty that comes along. If she has any doubts, she consoles herself with the thought that the plays themselves are always there: "they will not break from being bent or reshaped to fit a new context, or a new idea." I am less sanguine about that. People are deeply influenced by what they are offered, or what they can get, and bad interpretations and productions have a way of driving out good ones—not forever perhaps, but for a very long time.

THERE REMAINS the curious fact that two leading radical Shakespearean critics have simultaneously produced books that are more traditional in outlook than their previous work. In each case, as I have suggested, this can partly be explained by the nature of the job at hand. Greenblatt has written a popular biography. Garber has written an introductory guide. But can we also discern a new trend, or even a turning of the tide?

The whole thing seems more likely to be a coincidence. There have been no recantations, after all, no sign of either Greenblatt or Garber positively renouncing former views, or trying to steer disciples in new directions. It is just possible that one day their latest books will be seen as the first portents of a saner epoch in Shakespeare studies; but a lot more evidence is needed before we can get ready to greet such a happy turn of events. Two swallows don't make a summer.

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OBSERVATIONS

The Great Black Hope

Algis Valiunas

JACK JOHNSON, Joe Louis, Muhammad Ali: each, during his reign as heavyweight boxing champion of the world, was the most famous black man of his time. Not only were all three known for their fighting skills, but Johnson (1878-1946), Louis (1914-1981), and Ali (born 1942, and a victim of Parkinson's disease since 1982) were renowned, in some cases notorious, for what they did and said outside the ring as well. Their general deportment figured in their reputations even more than the signal contributions they made to the concussive art.

The public regarded all three men as representatives of their race. Black people suffered and triumphed along with them, as if sharing their fate; whites' reaction to them went a long way toward determining white attitudes toward blacks in general. Thus does sporting history run on the same track as social history. And in the case of sport, more perhaps than in any other field, writers also make history, as truly as do the men they write about.

The most famous description of boxing by a black writer comes in the first chapter of Ralph Ellison's great novel, *Invisible Man* (1952). The black narrator has delivered a high-school commencement address, in the manner of Booker T. Washington, showing Negro humility to be the essence of progress. The white men who run his Southern town are so impressed that they invite him to recite the speech at a black-tie smoker.

But first he is to take part in more robust entertainment. With nine other young blacks, he is instructed to put on boxing gloves and shorts and is led into the ballroom of a swank hotel. A knockout blonde appears in their midst, rapturously nude. The beads of sweat around the beautiful woman's nipples mesmerize the narrator; he wants to love her and ravish her and murder her and hide from her at the same time. As for the white crowd, it glories in the blacks' humiliation.

Humiliation is the evening's main event. The ten black youths are blindfolded in a boxing ring, and the battle royal begins; it is a war of all against all, and the last man upright will be the winner. "Everyone fought hysterically. It was complete anarchy. Everybody fought everybody else." The narrator is one of the final pair left standing, and he gets the beating of his life. Then, after further degradation, the young orator, bloody from his ordeal, is told to deliver his speech. Angry, he lets slip an unscripted call for social equality, and is immediately rebuked; he pleads confusion, the crowd is appeased, and he is rewarded with a calfskin briefcase.

Ellison here condenses the entire pre-civil-rights-era black predicament into the relation between hapless entertainer and vicious audience: one race's agony is the other's diversion. In the conjunction of black violence as white amusement, black lust for forbidden white flesh, black desire for respectability in white eyes, black defiance, and satanic white mockery, the scene has everything. But while the scene itself, in all its horrific abundance, is the fruit of Ellison's singular genius, it is by

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no means pure invention. It owes a great deal to the career of Jack Johnson.

THE BATTLE royal, with exclusively black participants and exclusively white onlookers, was a staple of Southern entertainment well into the 1940's, as one learns from Geoffrey Ward's riveting biography, *Unforgivable Blackness: The Rise and Fall of Jack Johnson*.* Ward is best-known for his collaborations with the documentary filmmaker Ken Burns; their four-hour film, *Unforgivable Blackness*, aired on PBS in January and is available on DVD.

The young Johnson, just getting started in his career, fought in some battles royal; the first was in Springfield, Illinois, in 1899. It was a winner-take-all affair, no blindfolds, and the white impresario offered $1.50 to the young black tramp who had gotten there by hopping freight trains from Texas—if he won. Johnson took on four other men, locals who ganged up on him from the opening bell; he whipped them all, telling the last one after he had knocked him down, "If you get up I will kill you." The promoter, who took the winner's earnings for himself, bought Johnson a few beers and told him he had a great future. No speechmaking and no calfskin briefcase, but the moral was the same: be a good boy, and you'll make out all right.

Although he decided he would not be anybody's boy, Johnson made out all right just the same, at least for a while. In Ward's telling, the whole of his early career was a battle royal, and his opponents were the forces of white racism coming at him from every direction. Newspaper cartoons by the hundreds, perhaps the thousands, portrayed Johnson's white opponents in recognizable caricature but Johnson himself as "an inky shape with popping eyes and rubbery lips, by turns threatening and ludicrous. . . . Even in ostensibly objective news stories Johnson [was] called the 'dinge,' the 'coon,' the 'stove,' the 'Texas Darky,' the 'big smoke,' the 'Ethiopian,' the 'Senegambian,' and—more often than one can credit—simply 'the nigger.'"

The fight game in those days seemed to have even less use for blacks than did white society in general. John L. Sullivan, who won the heavyweight crown in 1882 and held it for ten years—the first champion under the new rules requiring boxers to wear gloves—refused ever to fight a black challenger: "Any fighter who'd get into the same ring with a nigger loses my respect." No black contender would get a title shot until 1908, when Tommy Burns agreed to defend against Johnson: "All niggers are alike to me, but I'll fight him even though he is a nigger," Burns declared.

TAKING ON Johnson was not a shrewd career move. Early in the fight Burns called Johnson, who preferred a defensive style of deft cunning to the brawling common in that day, "a yellow cur," and told him to fight like a white man. Johnson proceeded to take him apart, telling him what punch he was about to throw and then connecting with it; according to Burns's later testimony, Johnson even made an observation about the white fighter's wife that would have gotten him lynched had the audience heard it. (The fight took place in the very deep South—Sydney, Australia.)

In his 1927 autobiography, Johnson would insist that, "To me it was not a racial triumph"; but others disagreed. The novelist Jack London, who covered the fight as a journalist, summed up the prevailing distress: Burns "was a white man and so am I. Naturally, I wanted to see the white man win."

No white man would beat Johnson for the next twelve years. No black man would, either, for Johnson refused ever to defend his title against one; there was little money to be made, and Johnson stood in greater danger of losing to a black than to any white challenger. The most formidable opponent he faced in that period was Jim Jeffries, touted by the fight promoter Tex Rickard as the "Hope of the White Race" and embraced as such by multitudes; one commentator ascribed to Jeffries the heritage earned by the battling white race at "Bunker Hill and Thermopylae and Hastings and Agincourt."

The beating Johnson gave Jeffries made him cry out in pain; Jack London wrote that he could not bear to watch. But the entire nation did watch, and some of its enraged white citizens decided to dish out vengeance. Johnson's victory sparked race riots in which perhaps two dozen people were killed and hundreds were injured, nearly all of them black. Johnson called the rioters of both races scum.

IN DUE course, even decent people of both races were calling Johnson himself scum, or much worse—and with reason. As exhilarating as is the story of his rise, so the story of his fall is woeful and dispiriting. In a world already hostile, Johnson made himself a world of trouble. Defining himself against the accommodationist Booker T. Washington, whom he found neither frank nor courageous, Johnson professed himself a new sort of Negro: "I have found no better way of avoiding race prejudice than to act with people of other races as if prejudice did not exist."

Such bold moral clarity is admirable; but between the profession and the reality, an abyss opened. Johnson did not act as though there were no prejudice; he acted as though the world were rife with it, and he took pleasure in bringing that prejudice to a head. His demeanor was the moral equivalent of the pimp roll: he behaved obnoxiously, even hatefully, and then blamed the white world for hating him.

Pleasure-seeking with no regard for consequences was his favored

* Knopf, 492 pp., $26.95.

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style. In the year after he clinched the title, he bought five cars and drove them fast and recklessly, causing accidents; when pulled over for speeding, sometimes he would laugh as he paid the fine, and often he would claim his only offense was driving while black. At the age of sixty-eight he would plow his car into a telephone pole at 70 miles per hour and die hours later.

"I always take a chance on my pleasures," he boasted of his passionate abandon. Sexual pleasures enjoyed pride of place; for them he took risks as great as those he took behind the wheel. He had a particular taste for white women—he claimed the black women he loved had bruised his ego—and was generally to be seen in the company of one or another white prostitute, whom he would introduce as Mrs. Jack Johnson. At a time when interracial marriage was forbidden in 36 states, he would marry three white women, one a prostitute, another a divorcée who had been kept by several racetrack habitués. His first wife, Etta Duryea, emotionally pole-axed by Johnson's relentless philandering and her parents' contempt for her choice of husband, killed herself; two weeks later Johnson was out partying with Lucille Cameron, an eighteen-year-old prostitute who would become his second wife.

In 1912, in the wake of a national outrage caused by the claim of Lucille's mother that he had abducted her daughter, Johnson was convicted under the Mann Act for transporting a woman across state lines for immoral purposes (he had paid train fare for one of his prostitute companions from Pittsburgh to Chicago, where he had set her up in her own brothel). The conviction only enhanced the moral standing Johnson enjoyed in his own estimation: "Oh well. They crucified Christ, why not me?"

He bolted the country for Paris, where he said he visited Napoleon's tomb twice a week and was a regular at the opera. When he fought in town, the novelist and literary pinup Colette would attend, along with an elegant crowd in evening dress. Johnson remained on the lam in England and Spain until 1920. Then, after losing his world title to the latest Great White Hope, the behemoth Jess Willard, he came home and served nearly a year in the federal prison at Leavenworth. When he returned to Chicago after his release, 2,000 black admirers turned up at his sister's apartment to greet him.

ALTHOUGH THERE were prominent blacks who denounced Johnson, Booker T. Washington among the loudest, most continued to revere him, not least because whites hated him so. Geoffrey Ward, a white liberal, mostly reveres Johnson, too, and particularly admires the brazenness with which he lived his free-wheeling sexual life. Ward carries this admiration to the point of sentimentality, though he remains just ambivalent enough to keep from being laughable. Regarding Johnson as a romantic pioneer who dared to love across the color line, he ignores the fact that Johnson treated his white women like whores (which many of them were), betraying them without compunction and beating them when he thought they needed it. Johnson used his erotic charm to dominate and humiliate not only his casual flings but also the women he supposedly loved. (His third wife, by her own account, was an exception; she said he treated her very well.)

He also flaunted his promiscuity as evidence not only of his own irresistible sexuality but that of black manhood at large. Although Ward neglects to mention this, one learns from David Remnick, editor of the *New Yorker* and a biographer of Muhammad Ali,* that, when sparring, Johnson used to wrap his penis in gauze in order to astonish white reporters. This preposterous male enhancement, playing upon whites' creepiest fantasies of black sexuality, points up that in his erotic life as in the rest of his life, Johnson was principally a showman who enjoyed baiting a hostile crowd.

Remnick calls Johnson—and Ward would certainly concur—"magnificently defiant, and defiantly magnificent." That is, both of these writers understand the pleasure Johnson took in flouting the mores of his time, taunting the white racists and the "Booker T. Negroes," to be a sign of virile rectitude. It might have been such a sign, had Johnson been a man protecting his most intimate life from public violation; instead, he was violating his private life and parading it in public for the pleasure of offending his enemies.

Ward takes the title of his book from a passage by the great black intellectual W.E.B. Du Bois, who wrote in 1914 that the "thrill of national disgust" at Johnson's "marital troubles" had little to do with his character and everything to do with his "unforgivable blackness." While it is true enough that, in the eyes of many, Johnson's blackness *was* unforgivable, to more reasonable people, white and black alike, what was repellent then as it is now was his callousness, arrogance, recklessness, demonstrative immorality, and readiness to cry racism whenever he was condemned for his actions. Jack Johnson started out as the best thing to happen for a long time to boxing and to black America. He ended up as one of the worst things to happen to both in his day.

JOHNSON WOULD be the last black heavyweight champion until 1937, his flamboyant bad-ass manner serving promoters as a perfect excuse to rebuild the race barrier. Joe Louis had to break it down all over again. His trainer, Jack Blackburn, told him from the start that, to have a shot at success, he would have to be seen as irreproachable—as the anti-Johnson.

* *King of the World: Muhammad Ali and the Rise of an American Hero* (1998).

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Louis and Johnson's own relationship became one of mutual loathing. When Johnson bragged on a Harlem street that he had just made a killing by betting against Louis in the first Max Schmeling fight—the German boxer was Hitler's favorite athlete—the enraged crowd attacked him, and police had to break up the melee. As Ward writes, "Every time Louis was called 'a credit to his race,' the implication was that Jack Johnson had been a discredit to it."

Ward intends us to understand that Johnson was no such thing. He also takes pleasure in pointing out that Louis, for his part, was by no means as good as he appeared. Louis did cheat compulsively on his wives, often with white women, among them Hollywood stars and starlets; he just made sure he was never photographed with them. And in his decline he suffered the violent paranoia that comes of cocaine addiction. But Ward goes on to insist that Louis's fake uprightness was useless anyway: sportswriters gave him racist nicknames, quoted him in "Uncle Remus dialect," and portrayed him as a savage or even a jungle beast. The suggestion here is that most whites ultimately despised the apparently virtuous Louis just as they did the blatantly profligate Johnson, and that whites will be their racist selves no matter what black people do.

Selective editing is required to create that impression. Ward conveniently ignores that a profound change occurred in the way whites regarded Louis during his reign as champion, and that this change heralded a new tolerance and even a certain respect for black Americans in general. Chris Mead charted this transformation in his 1985 biography, *Champion: Joe Louis, Black Hero in White America*—a book that Ward cites as the source of some of his quotations about white contempt for Louis but otherwise prefers to leave unmentioned.

From Mead we learn, however, that the two fights Louis had in 1937 and 1938 with Max Schmeling—Louis lost the first bout and won the rematch—helped unite Americans against Nazi racism and made them more uncomfortable about racism here at home. In 1942, Louis fought a title bout against Buddy Baer and donated his entire winnings to a charity for families of servicemen killed in action; the nation lionized Louis for risking a title everyone said was worth a million dollars—some $12 million in today's money—in order to serve the cause. When Louis volunteered for the army, regard for his heroism swelled still further, although he was never to see action. "To a country deeply divided along racial lines," Mead writes, "yet desperately wanting to believe it was united against a common foe, Louis was a symbol of national unity."

Louis did more than just symbolize; he used his celebrity and his Washington connections to press for more equitable treatment of blacks in the army. Indeed, for many black Americans, Louis represented salvation itself. Richard Wright called him "the concentrated essence of black triumph over white." Martin Luther King, Jr. told of a black prisoner in the 1930's South condemned to die by poison gas. "As the pellet dropped into the container, and gas curled upward, through the microphone [in the chamber] came these words: 'Save me, Joe Louis. Save me, Joe Louis. Save me, Joe Louis.'" There could be no more poignant testimony, King rightly said, to "the helplessness, the loneliness, and the profound despair of Negroes in that period." He might have added that Louis's reign as champion of the world helped make their life less helpless, lonely, and desperate.

THE SAME cannot justly be said of the reign of Muhammad Ali, though there are many who do say it. From his own imagined height, Ali condescended to Louis, but thought the world of Johnson. To James Earl Jones, who portrayed Johnson on Broadway in the 1968 Pulitzer Prize-winning play, *The Great White Hope*, Ali declared, "I grew to love the Jack Johnson image. I wanted to be rough, tough, arrogant, the nigger white folks didn't like." In his 1975 autobiography, *The Greatest* (written with Richard Durham), Ali says that upon returning to the ring in 1970 after his suspension from boxing for draft evasion, he intended to dress for his first bout, against the white tomato can Jerry Quarry, as Johnson did for an evening out, in a pearl-gray derby and black striped coat, and to declare, "Jack, wherever you are, rest easy in your grave. This White Hope won't get away." In the event, cooler heads seem to have prevailed.

One does not read of this in Ward's book; Ward says only that Ali modeled his boxing technique on Johnson's, and that he "saw, in the way the government pursued [Johnson] because of the way he chose to conduct his private life, the precursor of the way it was pursuing him because of his refusal to register for the draft during the Vietnam war." Like Ward, David Remnick in *King of the World* considers Ali's draft resistance heroic, but in telling the whole story he leaves the reader thinking otherwise. Ali sought his draft exemption as a so-called Muslim minister who preached non-violence, yet he voiced public approval for savage beatings committed by his brothers in the Nation of Islam, and he favored the murder of apostates. He also told a *Playboy* interviewer that if a Black Muslim woman went with a white man, they both ought to die. And, despite the severe Muslim enforcement of married chastity, the publicly holy Ali enjoyed the private career of, as his doctor and friend Ferdie Pacheco put it, a "pelvic missionary." Among writers as among fighters, disingenuous moral preening is transmitted down the generations.

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Like Johnson, Ali was distinguished in what used to be called, a century ago, "mouth-fighting." While keeping up a verbal barrage at his opponents, Johnson would toss off witty asides to the reporters and fans at ringside. For Ali, too, humiliating his opponent was as important as beating him physically, and that humiliation often served a racist purpose. His nastiest abuse, physical and verbal, was directed at the men he called the Black White Hopes: black fighters whom white people were betting on to beat him.

Floyd Patterson, one such black fighter, had assailed the Black Muslims as un-American purveyors of race hate; he earned an especially savage mauling. Ali, who could have knocked Patterson out easily, deliberately prolonged the agony, taunting him all the while, "Come on, American! Come on, white American!" Another was George Foreman, the champion whom he beat with Jack Johnson tactics in the 1974 "Rumble in the Jungle" in Zaire and who earlier, as Olympic gold medalist in 1968, had joyously waved the American flag in the ring as a riposte to the infamous black-power salute given by a pair of triumphant sprinters. Ali wrote of Foreman in *The Greatest*: "He is White America, Christianity, the Flag, the White Man, Porkchops." In *The Fight* (1975), Norman Mailer records Ali's screaming at Foreman, "I'm going to beat your Christian ass, you white flag-waving bitch, you."

ACCORDING TO Ali, Jesse Jackson once said that "Nothing shows the sickness in American society more than a prizefight between a White Hope and a black man." There may be something to that, but not exactly as either Jackson or Ali intended. For the sickness is in both races, and Ali himself was a veritable plague of race hate. His moral influence on black America has equaled if not surpassed Martin Luther King's, except that Ali is the unacknowledged father of the worst in current black culture—hip-hop insolence and violence among black youths, truculent and absurd posturing among luminaries like Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson himself.

Jack Johnson, Joe Louis, Muhammad Ali: each was the most famous black man of his time. On the face of it there is something disturbing about that distinction. That the best-known member of the race should be an athlete in the most brutal of sports hints at failure in more serious pursuits, and at white complicity in that failure.

Of course, it is not the fault of W.E.B. Du Bois or Ralph Ellison or Martin Luther King, Jr. that during their lifetimes they never soared so high in the popular estimation as these three large men renowned for smashing other large men in the face. That is just the way it is, and most people who would make heroes of such men know no better. But among their most fervent admirers and biographers there are also those who do know better, and who have nevertheless made cultural giants of moral pygmies like Jack Johnson and Muhammad Ali. This truckling of intelligence to brutishness is one more disservice that the liberal intelligentsia does to blacks and whites alike.

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MUSIC

Why Artie Shaw Fell Silent

Terry Teachout

ARTIE SHAW, the clarinetist and band leader who died in January at the age of ninety-four, was the last surviving giant of the Swing Era, the decade-long interlude (1935-45) during which American popular music was dominated by the medium-sized instrumental ensembles known as "big bands" that played jazz and jazz-flavored dance music.

Shaw's hit record of Cole Porter's "Begin the Beguine," made in 1938, established him overnight as one of the most successful bandleaders of the day—his group rivaled and occasionally surpassed in popularity that of his fellow clarinetist Benny Goodman—as well as an innovative soloist whose playing was regarded by many musicians as superior in certain respects to Goodman's. He also became a celebrity of a very different kind, a glamorous, much-publicized ladies' man who was married (and divorced) eight times and whose wives included the film stars Ava Gardner and Lana Turner. Yet his passing, though marked by lengthy obituaries in newspapers across America, surely came as a surprise to many readers who recalled his music with fondness but assumed that the man who made it had died long ago.

Why did Shaw's reputation fade? Because he decided in 1954 to retire, not merely from bandleading but also from playing the clarinet. While he occasionally led a big band in his old age, he never played again, despite the fact that he was at the peak of his powers when he chose to withdraw from public life. Many of his contemporaries, by contrast—Goodman, Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Lionel Hampton, Woody Herman, Stan Kenton—remained in the public eye until their deaths, continuing to perform long after the Swing Era was over and profiting from the renewed attention paid to big bands by the media from the 70's onward. Because Shaw did not, he ceased in large part to be remembered.

To be sure, he never fully disappeared from view. His recordings were reissued frequently, and from time to time he gave interviews in which he was invariably asked why he chose to stop playing at the age of forty-four. To this he usually replied that giving up the clarinet had been like cutting off "a gangrenous right arm . . . to save your life." Yet his stated reasons for quitting invariably failed to persuade, repeat them though he did throughout his half-century-long retirement.

Instead of playing, Shaw wrote. In addition to a full-length memoir, *The Trouble with Cinderella: An Outline of Identity* (1952), he later brought out two collections of short stories, neither of which met with any great enthusiasm. Most of his latter-day energies went into a monstrously long, still-unpublished autobiographical novel called *The Education of Albie Snow*. It may well be that this book, should it ever become available, will shed light on the peculiarities of temperament that led him to put down his horn. But even without it, a great deal is already known about the life and work of Artie Shaw—enough to speculate on why one of the finest

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jazz musicians of the 20th century fell silent halfway through his long and remarkable life.[1]

Born in 1910 on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, Arthur Jacob Arshawsky was the only child of a poor Yiddish-speaking tailor who dismissed as foolishness his son's love of music. But when his father deserted the family, necessity became the spur, and Art Shaw (the name young Arthur took early on, having become, in his words, "ashamed of being a Jew") turned himself into a self-taught journeyman saxophonist, working with dance bands around the country. In time he returned to New York and began playing in radio orchestras, and before long emerged as one of the city's top studio musicians.

Profitable as his work was, Shaw found it stultifying. He was passionate about jazz, but in the early years of the Depression saw no way to earn a living (and support his mother) except by playing banal commercial music. The edge of self-loathing he thereby acquired was honed still further by his growing awareness that there was a world beyond music of which he knew little. His response was to become a compulsive reader and to audit classes at Columbia and New York University. At the same time, though, he longed to be rich and famous. For the next quarter-century he would shuttle restlessly between these two psychological poles.

By 1936 the phenomenal success of Benny Goodman's band had cleared a path for ambitious jazzmen who wanted to reach a mass audience without watering down their music beyond recognition. Accordingly, Shaw, who had switched from alto saxophone to clarinet, gave up his lucrative studio gigs and started his own band. But it was a deliberately unconventional one, whose instrumentation included a string quartet. Though the group recorded to striking effect, it failed to appeal to dancers, and Shaw had no choice but to break it up and start from scratch.[2]

In *The Trouble with Cinderella*, Shaw recalls a conversation he had around this time with a dance-hall manager who found his band unsatisfactory. Said the manager:

> *Your* problem is to get people in here. And if you want to take your pants down on that goddamn bandstand every night and take a crap up there, and if people'll pay to come in here and see you do it—I'll pay you to take a crap up there every night.

It was an encounter Shaw never forgot.

Determined to make his mark by starting (in his words) "the loudest goddamn band in the world," Shaw put together a 15-piece ensemble without strings—but one that nonetheless bore his distinctive stamp. It played an attractive mix of standards, show tunes, and danceable jazz originals, arranged by Jerry Gray (frequently in collaboration with Shaw) in a straightforwardly swinging style marked by what the clarinetist described as "a crystal-clear transparency." Disdainful of the pop singers whom commercial considerations required him to feature, Shaw daringly hired the young Billie Holiday to sing with the all-white "Art Shaw and His New Music," as the group was briefly known.[3]

In 1938 Victor Records, for which Benny Goodman recorded, signed the twenty-eight-year-old Shaw to Bluebird, its lower-priced companion label, and in the process changed his first name to "Artie." His first record was the crisp, incisive Jerry Gray arrangement of "Begin the Beguine." It was an instant hit, and within a matter of weeks Shaw had metamorphosed into what he later called "a sort of weird, jazz-band-leading, clarinet-tooting, jitterbug-surrounded Symbol of American Youth." Although he was deeply ambivalent about the success for which he had longed, going so far as to give interviews in which he described his young fans as "morons," nothing he said or did could put them off, and by 1939 he was one of the most famous men in America.

For all his oft-expressed contempt of commercialism, Shaw had an uncanny knack for making good music that pleased the public. The "Beguine" ensemble, which also featured the explosive drumming of the twenty-one-year-old Buddy Rich and a meticulously coached saxophone section that played with unprecedented fluidity and grace, was a nonpareil dance band, by turns lyrical and galvanizingly hot. Though its arrangements were tailored to please ordinary listeners, the simplicity of those arrangements had the paradoxical effect of providing an ideal background for Shaw's own richly elaborate improvisations. On the clarinet, his intense, saxophone-like tone was sharply focused but never shrill, even when he was cavorting in the instrument's highest register—he extended the upper range of the clarinet far beyond its normal limits—and his blues solos were tinged with a pungent modal color reminiscent of synagogue chant.

[1] In addition, Shaw has been the subject of a dry but thorough biographical study, Vladimir Simosko's *Artie Shaw: A Musical Biography and Discography* (1990), and was also written about perceptively by Gunther Schuller in *The Swing Era* (1989) and by Richard M. Sudhalter in *Lost Chords: White Musicians and Their Contribution to Jazz, 1915-1945* (1999).

[2] Except as indicated, all recorded performances by Shaw mentioned in this piece are included in *Self Portrait* (Bluebird 09026-63808-2, five CD's), which contains studio and live recordings made between 1936 and 1954. The selections were chosen by Shaw and the reissue producer Orrin Keepnews, and the liner notes were written by Shaw in collaboration with Richard Sudhalter. The sound quality is widely variable but never worse than acceptable.

[3] When Holiday left a few months later, disgusted by the racist attitudes she encountered as a black singer appearing with a white group, Shaw replaced her with Helen Forrest, the most musically sensitive of the countless "chick singers" who performed with the big bands of the Swing Era.

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The "Beguine" band was essentially conventional in sound and style, and Shaw was its only major soloist (though Buddy Rich, immature though he then was, soon evolved into something approaching that). Even so, it managed to transcend the conventions of the early Swing Era through a combination of virtuosity, precision, and sheer élan, and its recordings, especially the thrilling live radio broadcasts of such popular songs as "The Carioca" and "At Sundown," which were commercially released on LP years later, retain their appeal to this day. But its increasingly neurotic leader proved incapable of coping with the band's popularity. In 1939, a year after its first recording, he walked off a New York bandstand in the middle of a set and never came back.

WITHIN A matter of months, Shaw had moved to Hollywood and started another band, this one equipped with nine string players and a pianist, Johnny Guarnieri, who doubled on harpsichord with the band's in-house jazz combo, the Gramercy Five. This new group was almost as popular as its predecessor, turning out an elegantly poised version of "Star Dust" (recorded in 1940) that remains one of the best-remembered performances of Hoagy Carmichael's most famous song. For all its seeming exoticism, the Gramercy Five proved no less appealing to the public, recording an original blues number called "Summit Ridge Drive" that gave Shaw yet another hit.

In 1941, the "Star Dust" band gave way to a 32-piece orchestra with fifteen string players, billed as "Artie Shaw and His Symphonic Swing." Shaw, who had been studying with the classical composer David Diamond, now sought to meld jazz and classical music in a manner reminiscent of Paul Whiteman's late-20's orchestra, using the bluesy trumpeter-vocalist Oran "Hot Lips" Page in somewhat the same way that Whiteman had featured the cornetist Bix Beiderbecke, an early Shaw idol. The erratic but brilliant drummer Dave Tough drove the potentially unwieldy group with consummate subtlety, and Paul Jordan contributed original compositions like "Suite No. 8," in which the string section was not tacked on as an afterthought but integrated into the ensemble with deceptive ease.

Shaw ran the band, like its predecessors, with an iron hand. Though he was no longer doing much arranging, he edited the scores played by the group in order to make them reflect his tastes as exactly as possible. Band members were given few opportunities for individual expression, save within the tightly controlled contexts created by Shaw and his arrangers; even his own solos were subordinated to the total musical effect. Nevertheless, the group's recordings, both in and out of the studio, are tremendously exciting, and the Symphonic Swing appears in retrospect to have offered Shaw the fullest possible expression of his wide-ranging musical interests.

Shaw broke up the Symphonic Swing after Pearl Harbor, enlisting in the U.S. Navy and touring the Pacific with a service band that played under fire at Guadalcanal. Combat fatigue forced him stateside in 1944, where he started a new, stringless band featuring the great jazz trumpeter Roy Eldridge and a library of arrangements that ranged from the Basie-style charts of Buster Harding to such wryly witty Eddie Sauter originals as "The Maid with the Flaccid Air."

Though the new group was known as an "arranger's band," Shaw was, as always, firmly in command, and its performances reflected his lifelong liking for versatility—and accessibility. Woody Herman's contemporaneous, bop-influenced First Herd was far looser in its approach, which may explain why jazz critics have always preferred it to Shaw's postwar band, even though both had a strongly progressive tilt.

LIKE THE First Herd, the Shaw band of 1945 contained young players, among them the guitarist Barney Kessel and the pianist Dodo Marmarosa, who were interested in the emerging style of jazz known as bebop. The ever-curious clarinetist began to explore this new idiom alongside them in an updated Gramercy Five. Following a brief hiatus during which he experimented with semi-classical arrangements for clarinet and chamber orchestra of pieces by Debussy, Ravel, Milhaud, Poulenc, and Shostakovich, he returned yet again to the bandstand in 1949, this time with a full-fledged bop band.[4]

By then, Shaw had cracked bebop's complex musical code, and his solos were as harmonically elaborate and modern-sounding as those of his younger sidemen. It was one of the most profound musical transformations ever effected by a well-known Swing-Era instrumentalist, yet Shaw brought it off without surrendering his individuality. Even as a bopper, he remained himself.

The big bands were dying off fast, however, and Shaw's broke up after just five months, the victim of changing popular tastes—as well as of his own reluctance to lose his hard-won status as a pop idol by playing challenging fare for uncomprehending audiences.[5] Thereafter he shuttled in and out of music, taking a year off to write *The Trouble with Cinderella*, a self-conscious but oddly compelling memoir in which he catalogued the destructive effects of what he called "$ucce$$." Having spent the previous decade in psychoanalysis, he had come to recognize that his mixed feelings about his profession had shaped the whole of his career. For all his longing to free himself from

[4] Most of Shaw's classical and semi-classical recordings are collected on *The Artistry of Artie Shaw* (Hep CD 78).

[5] Woody Herman, by contrast, continued to lead uncompromisingly swinging big bands throughout the 50's and after, even during the lean years when such ensembles found little favor with dancers.

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the seductive lures of superstardom, Shaw had never been quite willing to turn his back on fame:

> I finally came to realize that there must be something basically wrong with a fellow who tells himself he only wants enough money to keep going while he tries to do something he wants to do, but who for some reason never seems to be able to get together enough money to go ahead and do it.

Two years later, he put together one last Gramercy Five, a bop-flavored yet audience-friendly group, influenced by the then-popular George Shearing Quintet, in which Shaw joined forces with the guitarist Tal Farlow and the pianist Hank Jones, two of the top jazz soloists of the 50's. Stimulated by their superb playing, he rose to new heights of musical sophistication. It seemed he was finally ready to give up on "$ucce$$" and settle for being the uniquely individual jazz soloist he was.

Instead, he stopped playing music, having apparently come to the conclusion that since he was incapable of balancing his need for serious self-expression with his perverse longing for celebrity, his only hope of sanity was to get out of the business altogether. While one may take his innumerable protestations on this subject with a grain of salt—he must also have known that his brand of jazz no longer appealed to the general public—the fact remains that he never again picked up his clarinet.

Music's loss was not literature's gain. For all its interest as a personal document, *The Trouble with Cinderella* is too evidently the work of an intellectual *manqué*, an autodidact eager to show off his hard-won knowledge. (Each chapter begins with a different epigraph.) Unfortunately, Shaw had little to say about anything other than himself—he was in private life a garrulous, self-obsessed monologist—which undoubtedly explains why he had no success as a writer of fiction, and why *The Education of Albie Snow* has remained unpublished.

How, then, was it possible for him to give up music, at which he was talented beyond measure, in favor of writing, for which he had a genuine but limited gift? Was it a matter of self-preservation—or of self-deception? Or did his conflicts go deeper still? In an interview with Richard Sudhalter, the tenor saxophonist Jerry Jerome, who played with Shaw in the 40's, made a remark that cut straight to the heart of the matter:

> I still wonder whether part of it wasn't just some need to see himself as above being just a musician. He didn't want to be on the plane of ordinary people; he wanted to be an *intellectual*, in the worst way.

I doubt that anything more revealing has ever been said about Artie Shaw. It was not merely that he was ambivalent about popular music. His ambivalence, it seems clear, encompassed music as a *career*.

Would he have felt differently about music—and about himself—had he aspired instead to be Arthur Arshawsky, first clarinetist of the New York Philharmonic? Certainly his attempts to add strings to his big bands (and harpsichord to the Gramercy Five), as well as his continuing interest in classical music, suggest as much. By contrast, to play accessible jazz for popular audiences simply was not good enough, and it could only have galled him that he did it so well. "Art was never meant to be entertaining," he said on countless occasions. But his was, hugely so—and this made it impossible for him to see it as art.[6]

At the very end of his life, however, Shaw did seem to accept the nature of his achievement, even as he had long ago accepted the Jewishness that he had once changed his name in order to escape. In 2001 he helped to put together *Self Portrait*, a boxed set of his finest recordings. In the liner notes he made the following statement:

> A lot of the music that bands like mine were playing 50 or 60 years ago was functional: people danced to it. I certainly had no idea that a half-century later people would think of it as "concert" music. Or just music, period. . . . At some point—probably while I was in the Navy, as a result of seeing the way those men reacted to our music—it began to dawn on me that whether I realized it or not I'd created a good-sized chunk of durable Americana. Something lasting.

It may in fact have taken longer than that for him to realize it, but fortunately Artie Shaw lived to know that his music, "functional" and "entertaining" though it undeniably was, had withstood the test of time. One cannot help wishing he had known it a half-century sooner—although it may also be that by then he had said everything he had to say. "I did all you can do with a clarinet," he remarked in a 1994 interview. "Any more would have been less." That might be his epitaph.

[6] No doubt it galled him still further that Benny Goodman, whom he regarded as a philistine and held in near-contempt, made a far more serious and thoroughgoing commitment to classical music—and was far more successful playing it than Shaw, who was never more than a (greatly gifted) dilettante.

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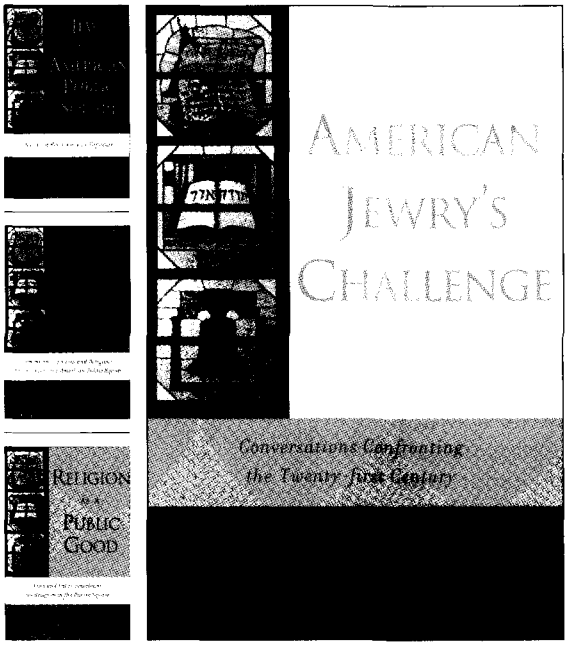

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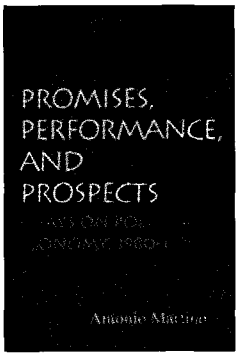

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Books in Review

Fox Hunt

The Dragons of Expectation:
Reality and Delusion
in the Course of History

by Robert Conquest

Norton. 272 pp. $24.95

Reviewed by
Wilfred M. McClay

In his famous 1951 essay on Leo Tolstoy, "The Hedgehog and the Fox," Isaiah Berlin mined a fragmentary saying of the Greek poet Archilochus to create one of the most intriguing, if also sometimes misleading, dichotomies in the history of ideas.

"Hedgehogs" were those thinkers—Lucretius, Plato, Dante, Hegel, Dostoevsky—who were captives to a single large and all-embracing idea or concern. "Foxes," on the other hand, were the elusive characters—Herodotus, Shakespeare, Montaigne—who entertained multifarious ideas, who saw many different principles and goods at work in the world, and were pleased to let them roam free rather than seeking to enclose them in the frame of a Big Picture. Hedgehogs were monists, foxes were pluralists, and the difference between them, as Berlin saw it, divided not only writers or thinkers but "human beings in general."

We are right to approach such formulations with suspicion. As the wags say, there are two kinds of people in the world: those who think there are two kinds of people, and those who don't. But there is no doubt that Berlin's dichotomy shed valuable light on Tolstoy in particular. He was, in Berlin's analysis, a fox by nature who nevertheless believed in the necessity of being a hedgehog—a keen and subtle observer of the human condition who felt compelled to smother his insights and talents under a heavy blanket of big, unwieldy, mechanistic, and poorly thought-through conceptions of History. This contradiction—between what Tolstoy "believed about men and events, and what he thought he believed"—was finally debilitating; his inability to resolve the contradiction fatally undermined both his thought and his art.

I dwell on the example of Tolstoy because it gives us a standard against which to estimate the achievement of Robert Conquest, not only in his present book but also in his remarkable career as a student of Soviet history. Such a comparison is grounded in something far more significant than both writers' involvement in the bloody ground of the Russian past. For if there is one thing that is made clear in *The Dragons of Expectation*, it is that Robert Conquest is another of those foxes by nature, but one who was forced, by the circumstances of his times and by his subject matter, to function as something of a hedgehog. This may well be how he will be remembered; and remembered he surely will be.

Conquest's name will forever be associated, rightly and honorably, with his patient, courageous, and relentless exposure of the depths of depravity to which the regime of Soviet Communism, and the ranks of its Western apologists, descended during the century just past. The mas-

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A Culture of Forgetting
Ruth Linn

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sively detailed and unflinching vision of books like *The Great Terror* (1968), his definitive study of Stalin's purges, and *Harvest of Sorrow* (1986), his equally definitive study of Stalin's collectivization of agriculture, has only been confirmed and upheld by the flood of documents emerging out of the opening of Soviet archives to researchers in the last decade and a half.

One might have expected that a writer whose labors had been confined to such a grim life-task would have been mentally consumed by it. The title of Conquest's *Reflections on a Ravaged Century* (1999) might suggest just such a condition—a hedgehog, and a haunted one at that. But, as he demonstrates in this new book—a witty, jaunty, humane, and thoroughly engaging collection of loosely connected essays—that is not at all the case. Allowing himself the freedom to stroll casually through a wide array of subjects, feeling under no compulsion to be definitive, he writes here as a man who has earned the right to express his opinions as he damned well pleases, and to be interested in whatever suits him.

There is little that does not suit him. Language, epistemology, liberalism, socialism, the cultural preconditions for democracy, the superiority of the Anglosphere, the abject failure of the UN and the EU, the "unteachable corners" of academia, the indispensable importance of art and the humanities, the horrors of professionalized literary appreciation, the recovery of form in modern poetry, the dangers of a cultural bureaucracy, the far frontiers of science—all these subjects are touched upon with the intelligence and confidence of a man who, like Archilochus's fox, knows many things, and knows many of them in his bones. It is as if he were writing to show, defiantly, that not even the megalithic force of Soviet Communism was going to make him into a hedgehog.

In a sense, Conquest's manner of discourse serves to model the kind of civilization he esteems—one that values individual idiosyncrasy and openness, and disdains fanaticism and monomania. But this is not to say that his work lacks consistent themes. Underlying all is a belief in the power of ideas, both for good and (perhaps especially) for ill, in human history.

Conquest's title is taken from a 19th-century translation of one of the Norse Eddas. The image of "dragons of expectation," which in the original generate forces of apocalyptic destruction through the beating of their wings, suggests the process by which ideas can produce visions of radical transformation that in turn may lead to manias and dogmas. Although history is a story of contingencies, and the future is unpredictable, much depends, in Conquest's settled view, on "whether the dragons of expectation can be cleared out of our mental skies."

On these grounds, not surprisingly, Conquest is contemptuous of the French Enlightenment, and indeed of much of the Continental European contribution to Western political and social thought. He disposes of them in summary fashion, clearly enjoying himself. The French Revolution's chief contributions to our culture, he posits, were "exciting generalities," mass conscription, and the idea of the Nation, while the Germans gave the world the befuddling Hegel and all his impossible epigones, Marxist and otherwise. As a strong proponent of the sturdy Anglo-American tradition of "law and liberty," Conquest finds very little to be said for its rivals. "Do the United States and the United Kingdom have anything much to learn," he asks, "from the European political or politico-academic theories and practices of the last hundred years?" He answers the question briskly: "I think not."

The folly of the intellectuals is another frequent preoccupation. Their addiction to general words and concepts has the effect, Conquest says, of turning these tools of thought into "brain blindfolds" and "mind-block-

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ers," obstructing understanding and stifling debate. He believes that, in our own post-Marxist, post-socialist climate, intellectual discourse is devolving toward "an increasingly irrational conformism," defined almost entirely by attacks on the Anglo-American culture of law and liberty that "fail to advance *anything* in the way of positive alternatives, however doctrinaire or even debatable." In a nice summation of Burkean wisdom, he cautions that "we should not countenance the inflation of [our society's] real defects into rejection of the three-quarters open society and its proposed replacement by a phantom, untried and untrue."

All in all, *The Dragons of Expectation* abounds with good sense, and one can recommend it warmly. And yet—there is a certain something that one finds missing. In his hardheaded anti-metaphysical premises and his eschewal of "expectation," Conquest sometimes seems to embrace a form of moderate humaneness that asks too much of humanity. For human beings are nourished and motivated not only by "the actual" but by projections of the ideal, and also by hope—not the same thing as expectation, but closely akin to it. It is precisely these qualities that distinguish human beings from the competition.

To put it another way, one can share entirely Conquest's preference for the Anglo-American emphasis on concreteness, incrementalism, historical accretion, common law, muddling through, and all the rest. But those qualities are not the entirety of that tradition, and they exist in tension with other qualities, metaphysical and moral, that are precisely what has given meaning to the moderation. As in Berlin's pluralism, so in Conquest, the question of the proper ends of life is never quite on the table for consideration—or when it is, there are more ends than there is table space.

One catches a glimpse of this in Conquest's epilogue, which is curiously—foxily—a poem. Here is Conquest's attempt to address "the immensities of the universe . . . the questions of cosmology and philosophy . . . of human love and death." It is a fascinating blend of scientific and poetic imagery, a mélange of astronomical immensities, "seething quanta," "unobserved arrhythmias," a "sleet of atoms," and so on. The overall picture is somehow lively and yet bleakly mechanistic and fatalistic, with vast spaces and fleeting temporalities that recall the famous terror of Pascal.

But then Conquest pauses to acknowledge, and to seem almost comforted by, the fact that impenetrable mysteries remain, for science does not go to the deepest places. "Concept cantilevers," he writes, "some-

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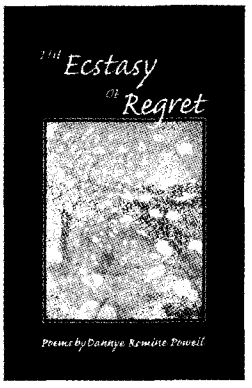

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how don't solve/The bridging of the spidery gulf/Between the nerved senses and the self." He even concedes that, in unguarded moments, "wisps of totality may take shape,/mini-moments smooth as chiseled stone . . . with all the undivine withdrawn." Or, "faintly felt through the near alive,/The softest touch of a tendril of love/Too light for leaf or belief."

In other words, the things that make life worth living. On these questions, Conquest warns us, "one can only speak as an individual." If that were really true, though, why would he have written a poem about them, let alone one so reminiscent of Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach"? But, granting his dubious premise for the moment, one can certainly admire without qualification Robert Conquest's determination to be a fox, even to the point of guarding from suspect generalization those "wisps of totality," with "the undivine withdrawn."

At a Glance

Blink:
The Power of Thinking
Without Thinking
by Malcolm Gladwell
Little Brown. 288 pp. $25.95

Reviewed by
Kevin Shapiro

Who can be wise, amazed, temperate and furious,/Loyal and neutral, in a moment? No man:/The expedition of my violent love/Outrun the pauser, reason.

—*Macbeth*, Act 2, Scene 3

DECISIONS—EVEN snap decisions—must come from somewhere. Some part of the brain must select, plan, and execute every one of our actions, even if the entire process unfolds in milliseconds, too fleeting for scrutiny by the conscious mind. At the same time, other parts of the brain must sift the torrents of information that inundate our senses, choosing which of the various streams to direct to our attention and which to divert. Only rarely is there time to ponder. More often we react in an instant: we like a new food or hate it; we smile at a stranger or look away; laugh at a joke or roll our eyes. All of this happens in the span of a heartbeat. And most of us, for the most part, have as little insight into our thoughts in that one beat as Macbeth claimed to have had when he murdered King Duncan's chamberlains.

Malcolm Gladwell, a staff writer for the *New Yorker* and the author of a previous bestselling book, *The Tipping Point*, about how "little things can make a big difference," wants to know how this works. He calls this kind of cognition *Blink*—as in the blink of an eye. What is more, he suspects that "blink," or, as his subtitle puts it, "thinking without thinking," might sometimes be more accurate and more powerful than reason, even if at other times it leads us astray. His ultimate aim is to discover what makes for good instincts and, conversely, why our instincts are sometimes wildly off the mark.

If we can understand that, Gladwell believes that we can actually tame and educate the unconscious mind. If he is right, that would be no mean feat.

GLADWELL BEGINS by relating an episode notorious in art circles. In 1984, the J. Paul Getty Museum purchased a kouros, a kind of archaic Greek statue, at a price of just under $10 million. Naturally, the Getty was convinced that the artifact was authentic: it seemed to have a bona-fide provenance, and scientific tests suggested that the marble was appropriately aged. And yet, strangely enough, every art historian who looked at the kouros sensed instantly, viscerally, that it was a fake.

In the end, of course, the art historians were proved right; under closer scrutiny, the Getty's case for the statue withered. What Gladwell wants to understand is *why* the experts were right—how they could apprehend in a single glance what months of research by lawyers and chemists had failed to prove.

Curiously, when he took the obvious approach and simply asked the art historians, Gladwell got nowhere. One reported that he was overcome with nausea at the sight of the object, while another said that he felt there was a glass wall between him and the statue. In other words, they knew, but they did not know how they knew. Even more curiously, Gladwell found the same was true of experts in other fields when placed in analogous situations.

Most curious of all is the fact that each of us seems to have extremely poor insight into the subject we know best—namely, ourselves. Especially when we act quickly or spontaneously, our responses are shaped less by our conscious thoughts than by information that happens to be percolating through the subconscious mind. What accounts for this?

Gladwell finds some leads in the work of social psychologists who study behavior in controlled settings. The simple act of solving a word puzzle with items like *worried*, *Florida*, and *bingo* can cause us to do an impression of old age, walking more slowly without noticing it. More ominously, researchers have found that people of all races are quicker to form implicit associations between "black" and "bad" than between "black" and "good"—even people who profess to be completely free of conscious racism or prejudice. To Gladwell, such findings underscore the idea that much of our thought takes place behind a locked door, and what goes on behind that locked door can shape our responses in unknown ways.

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To tame our instincts, then, we need to crack open the lock. The key seems to be something Gladwell calls "thin-slicing": the ability to extract, in an instant, the handful of features in any situation that are crucial to making a judgment.

A paradigm of thin-slicing is the work of the psychologist John Gottman, who has developed a startlingly accurate method of predicting the success or failure of marital relationships by picking out certain telltale signs. Gottman has found, for example, that a contemptuous remark or a roll of the eyes—the sort of thing that many of us would be inclined to ignore—can spell disaster for a marriage. He knows because he has thousands of observations and years of data to prove it; his statistics show that fifteen minutes of conversation are enough to determine, four times out of five, whether a couple will still be married fifteen years later.

In some sense, we thin-slice every day. Our first impressions, our spontaneous likes and dislikes, are all examples of snap judgments based on thin slices of information. And, as it turns out, those judgments can be remarkably accurate. Untrained observers can predict how students will evaluate a teacher's effectiveness just by observing a few seconds of a lecture.

Of course, sometimes we guess wrong. Doctors in emergency rooms, Gladwell tells us, are often distracted by risk factors that may be relevant in the long term, but not in the immediacy of the moment—causing them to misjudge, for example, the chances that a patient has suffered a heart attack. Police officers, caught up in the heat of a high-speed chase or on patrol in a gritty and crime-ridden neighborhood, can become trapped by catastrophic errors. A tragic example cited by Gladwell is the 1999 shooting of Amadou Diallo, the Guinean immigrant whose wallet was mistaken for a gun late at night in the Bronx.

But with training, Gladwell suggests, we can learn to attend to information that is truly valuable and to discard the irrelevant and the misleading. We can become attuned to thinner slices, the ones with ever greater predictive value. For example, the average person is adept at reading facial expressions for clues about what others are thinking. Those trained to thin-slice, however, can detect "microexpressions," ephemeral twitches of the facial muscles that cannot readily be faked or suppressed—revealing in that instant whether someone is lying or bluffing, secretly happy or full of disdain.

And thin-slicing is good for more than parlor tricks. By following a simple decision tree, doctors can focus on the information that is most crucial to a patient's immediate fate. Patrolmen can learn to keep their gut reactions in check, thin-slicing to gauge better whether a suspect is armed or unarmed, dangerous or harmless.

In six chapters, Gladwell lays out for the reader a trove of tantalizing examples of "thinking without thinking." What do they all have in common, and what can we learn from them?

Alas, the problem with *Blink* is that Gladwell does not seem to know—or if he does, he is not telling. As a result, the book is dissatisfying, replete with unanswered questions, terminological confusion, and garden paths wandered down to no purpose or outlet. The idea seems to be that a diverse set of phenomena—from the gut feelings of experts to the biases of everyday life—are instances of the same kind of thought; unfortunately, though, Gladwell does not go much deeper than that, papering over the resulting deficit by the promiscuous use of false analogies and buzzwords. Is the adrenaline rush of a policeman chasing a suspect fundamentally similar to the profound social impairment of an

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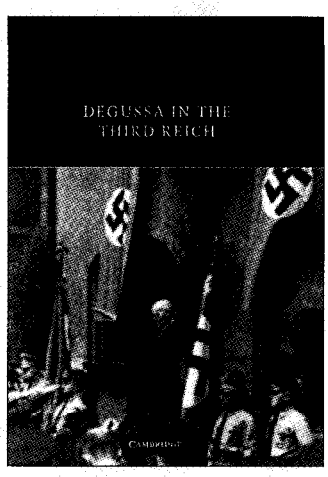
Degussa in the Third Reich

By Peter Hayes



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autistic child? Probably not, especially from a neuroscientific point of view; nevertheless, Gladwell refers to them both as instances of "mind-blindness."

And just what, according to Gladwell, is "thin-slicing"? As he defines it, it is the ability to pick out the few crucial facts that separate a good judgment from a bad one. But then, how is it that the experts who spotted the counterfeit kouros were thin-slicing? They seemed to respond to the statue as a whole, without being able to pinpoint any obvious giveaways.

Indeed, much more can be said than this. Neuroscience teaches us that the assessment of objects by experts is more like recognizing faces than recognizing facial expressions. Specifically, when we look at faces, we rely on a part of the brain called the fusiform gyrus, tucked into the hollow of the temporal bone underneath the ear. The fusiform gyrus is exquisitely sensitive to faces as wholes, allowing us to tell apart people who may look very similar to one another—and conversely, allowing us to identify the same person regardless of age or cosmetic change. On the other hand, most of us have no need to discriminate carefully among other objects (like pieces of marble), so we use a cruder visual processing area elsewhere in the brain.

What is different about experts is that they use the fusiform gyrus not only for faces, but also for the objects of their expertise. To an expert in archaic sculpture, then, looking at a fake kouros must be like looking at a person with a wig and false teeth: something is amiss, even if we cannot immediately identify what it is.

Blink never bothers to venture this kind of explanation, or indeed to probe very deeply into any of the phenomena it describes. What accounts for the experts' revulsion at the kouros? What is it about the brain that is responsible for "gut" feelings? Gladwell notes that our bodies often respond before our brains catch up; gamblers sweat before they become consciously aware of risky bets, and sometimes we smile or frown before we feel elated or depressed. Something, surely, connects all of these observations. Is it that rapid judgments are funneled through the ancient provinces of the nervous system—the parts responsible for increasing our heart rates and turning our stomachs? Whatever the answer, the question itself has eluded Gladwell entirely.

IF GLADWELL does not dig anywhere near deeply enough, he errs in a different direction by concocting bizarrely complicated interpretations of simple phenomena. It is possible, as he suggests, that the policemen who shot Amadou Diallo were rendered temporarily blind—by the fear of a gun, perhaps, or by their implicit biases—to the facial expressions that would have otherwise suggested his innocence. It is also possible that they had trouble seeing in the dark. And if emergency-room doctors have trouble diagnosing heart attacks, is it really because the more information they have, the worse off they are? More likely, the problem is that ER doctors who dispatch patients to the cardiac-care unit rarely find out which of them actually had suffered a heart attack and which had not. In other words, the trouble is not too much information, but a lack of it: they never get the feedback necessary to refine their personal decision trees.

In his introduction to *Blink*, Gladwell promises to change the way we think about thinking. On closer inspection, the book turns out to be little more than an amalgam of interesting observations and tiresome political bromides, like the need to root out our supposedly pernicious unconscious prejudices by surrounding ourselves with diverse-looking people. And that is a shame, because the subject is a fascinating one; there is much still to be said about the hidden machinations of the human mind.

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Reviewed by
David G. Roskies

WHILE ON an academic tour of Lithuania last summer, I came upon a folio-sized book displayed in stores all over the country. It stood out as the only English-language book in the window, and certainly as the only one whose cover also featured Hebrew lettering. Upon inspection, the book, *Lithuanian Jewish Culture*, turned out to have been heavily subsidized by the Republic of Lithuania, and was clearly intended for the tourist trade and for coffee tables in the West. The tipoff was not just the $100 price tag, the elaborate multicolored maps, or the hundreds of facsimiles and photos; it was the upbeat message. However remote present-day Lithuania may seem from anything Jewish, however tiny its own surviving Jewish population, *Lithuanian Jewish Culture* offers up a technicolor dreamscape of nostalgia, a "Jewish Lithuania" stretching from the Baltic to Smolensk, its great "Litvak civilization" encompassing hundreds of once-Jewish cities, towns, and hamlets.

Dovid Katz, the author of *Lithuanian Jewish Culture*, is himself an

DAVID G. ROSKIES *teaches literature at the Jewish Theological Seminary and is the editor-in-chief of the New Yiddish Library, a series being brought out by Yale.*

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American-born "Litvak," or Jew of Lithuanian descent, who in 1999 came full circle by making his home in the country's capital city of Vilnius, where he promptly established the first-ever Yiddish Institute at Vilnius University. Katz is also a noted scholar who now, in *Words on Fire*, has two compelling stories to tell about his academic specialty, the Yiddish language. One is the story of Yiddish as the key to a transnational, cross-cultural, pan-European civilization "of seemingly infinite differentiation." The other is the story of Yiddish as *the* major repository of internal Jewish memory, continuity, tradition, and "fun."

To anyone meeting him in person, Dovid Katz comes across as a mixture of Falstaff, Karl Marx, and a charismatic hasidic *rebbe*. Meeting him in print gives the same impression.

The Falstaffian side of his character is most evident in his aggressively antic style. Eight of this book's eleven chapters treat an arcane corpus of medieval and early-modern works that most readers will never have heard of: biblical glosses, verse romances, rhymed chronicles, penitential and petitionary prayers, moralistic tracts. Intent upon enlivening this miscellany of obscure texts, Katz employs 60's slang and Madison Avenue hype, informing us at one point that a 14th-century scholar "went nuclear" over the idea of producing a self-help manual in Yiddish for married couples, at another point describing a hypothetical reader as "rolling in laughter" at the "homespun Yiddish" in a verse romance from the Italian Renaissance, at still another hailing a yet-to-be-published anthology of early Yiddish texts "puls[ing] with the rhythms of a confident, wholly natural 'Jewish-in-Jewish' civilization that is spiritually at peace with itself and with components of the outside world that do not threaten it." Whatever the charms of Old Yiddish literature, the author's prose is in perpetual overdrive.

The Karl Marx aspect is less straightforward. Not that Katz exactly hides the fact that he is a red-diaper baby: in a sketchy survey of Yiddish culture in the 20th century, he singles out "left-wing poets" for special praise and lauds the radical-Left variety of Yiddish popular culture over the supposedly tired products of the mainstream. More subtle is his recurrent tactic of championing a deep-seated "Yiddish rebellion" against hierarchical authority that has, supposedly, been under way in Jewish life for centuries.

For Katz, it appears, every Yiddish book, regardless of its subject or theme, is in and of itself a political statement, and it is so simply by virtue of the fact of having been written in Yiddish, the lowly vernacular, rather than in either of the two higher-status Jewish languages of Hebrew and Aramaic. Thus, Jacob ben Joseph of Yanov, the editor-translator of the *Tsene-Urene*, a famous Yiddish homiletic Bible from the 16th century, is hailed by Katz as the "liberator" of Jewish women, his main intended audience. Other examples of this "daring Yiddish counter-spirit" to the stratified and male-dominated society of traditional East European Jewry are replete throughout the book.

But this brings us to the hasidic *rebbe* in Katz. For him, Yiddish is the supreme expression of the culture of Ashkenaz—i.e., Franco-German and East European—Jewry. Some of the qualities of that culture, he stipulates, are its humor, its self-confidence, and its companionability with some of the more benign aspects of the outside world. But the uniqueness of Ashkenaz, the quality that makes it not just Jewish but "Jewish-in-Jewish," lies elsewhere. It is an artifact of the "internal Jewish trilingualism" we have already encountered. And in that triad, Yiddish had a unique advantage. After all, the two scriptural and scribal languages of Hebrew and Aramaic were not spoken, while Yiddish, though traditionally ranked below them, was not only spoken but spoken universally.

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Katz has more or less lifted this conceptual framework, without acknowledgment, from the great historian of the Yiddish language, Max Weinreich. One minor difference is that whereas Weinreich treated Hebrew and Aramaic as a single linguistic-cultural entity, a language the Jews called "*loshn-koydesh*," the sacred tongue, Katz has split them asunder, the better, no doubt, to highlight the rebellious specialness of Yiddish. Another and more important difference is that Weinreich spoke of Yiddish as "the language of the Way of the Talmud"—that is, a language that came to enjoy "co-sanctification" with Hebrew-Aramaic because of the manifold ways in which it helped its speakers mediate the laws and customs of rabbinic Judaism. By contrast, Katz locates one of the essential qualities of Ashkenaz not in adherence to talmudic law but in an affinity to kabbalah, or Jewish mysticism. Accordingly, he devotes a great deal of space in *Words on Fire* to reviewing the history of Jewish mysticism from the 11th-century Ashkenazi pietists to the rise and fall of Sabbetai Zvi, the 17th-century false messiah, and beyond.

The reason for this displacement of the Talmud, the supreme casebook of rabbinic law and lore, becomes clear when Katz's historical survey finally reaches the development of Hasidism in the 18th century. This movement, the culminating phase of kabbalah, remains, in Katz's formulation, "the most potent force in world Jewry," its adherents having proved "able to survive everything the modern world, Jewish or non-Jewish, has hurled at" them. And the languages in which they have characteristically accomplished that monumental task? Hebrew and Aramaic, their languages of prayer and study, to be sure; but Yiddish, their spoken language and the language in which they *conduct* their study, above all. Indeed, in the book's final chapter we learn why the story of Yiddish is to be considered, as Katz's title suggests, "unfinished": because its pages are still being written by the only vital and truly resilient branch of Jewry, the Yiddish-speaking, ultra-Orthodox Hasidim.

As a story-teller, Dovid Katz leaves much to be desired. Because he seems never to have learned the difference between telling and showing, his hyped-up prose engenders as much head-scratching tedium as do his polemics and his special pleading. Because he has a better ear for his own voice than for literature, his selections from seven centuries' worth of Yiddish writing seem both paltry and pedestrian. His case for Hasidism having preserved the sanctity of Yiddish, dubious as it is, would have been bolstered by just one passage from *The Tales* of Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav, the only major kabbalistic work originally composed in that language; alas, no passage is forthcoming.

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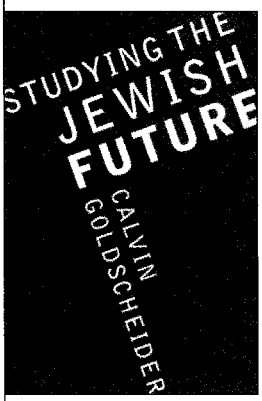

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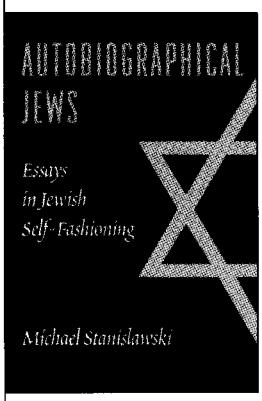

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By the concluding chapters, in any case, *Words on Fire* has lost all pretense to being a story and has descended into dogmatic flailing—against the early Zionists who fought for Hebrew over Yiddish as the Jewish national language, against contemporary professors of Yiddish who lack either the proper linguistic training or the proper ideological disposition, and so forth. The rich culture wars between Hebrew and Yiddish in pre-state Palestine are laid out in ten bloody and partisan pages, ending in a screed against modern-day Hebrew, a language Katz satirically labels "Israeli." This self-professed historian of Ashkenaz seems utterly deaf to the manifold ways in which modern Hebrew has actually absorbed not only the music of Yiddish but thereby the spirit of Ashkenaz itself—even as it has absorbed Judeo-Arabic, Judeo-Romance, Judeo-Persian, Judeo-Greek, neo-Aramaic, Amharic, and other Jewish languages.

To move from Dovid Katz to Aaron Lansky is to move from ideology to idealism. *Outwitting History*, a first-person account, tracks the journey of a third-generation American Jew, with only a vestigial memory of his immigrant past, who in the 1980's discovered the single rescuable element of that past: disused Yiddish books, stored away in cellars or thrown into dumpsters awaiting the wrecking ball of urban renewal.

Between the covers of these books, the young Lansky realized, lay one of the great revolutions of modern times—the cultural enlightenment and self-emancipation of East European Jewry. Since many of the Jews who first owned and read them had voted with their feet, setting out from their compact, Yiddish-speaking communities to the far ends of the earth, the books themselves, both old and new, had ended up in Australia, South Africa, Israel, and in every conceivable place in North and South America. By the time Lansky, his small army of volunteers, and his pickup truck arrived on the scene—just one step ahead of the dump, the rats, and the mildew—the books were already indecipherable by the children, and sometimes even by the surviving spouses, of the original owners. The cultural revolution had succeeded beyond anyone's wildest dreams: Yiddish readers had ended by emancipating themselves from themselves.

The physical rescue of the books turned out to be the easy part. Putting them in order, making the collection accessible, taking possession of their intellectual content, were by far the more daunting tasks. In an apple orchard in western Massachusetts, Lansky proceeded to build the National Yiddish Book Center, a state-of-the-art repository and cultural center to house, exhibit, and "unpack" the contents of one million unread and unwanted volumes. That center and its many programs and projects thrive today.

Since I collaborate with Aaron Lansky on one of his center's projects, I can hardly claim to be a disinterested reviewer of his book. What I can objectively say is that, in more ways than one, the story he tells in a deceptively light-hearted, picaresque style makes an instructive contrast to Dovid Katz's *Words on Fire*.

Can the dead books of Yiddish rise again? Can history be "outwitted"? Katz and Lansky lay out two mutually incompatible blueprints. For Katz, only by resegregating themselves, and by reaffirming the sacred triad of Hebrew-Aramaic-Yiddish, will Jews succeed in bringing about a rebirth of Ashkenazi culture. Only thus, among the religiously faithful, will Yiddish itself return to its confident, natural, "Jewish-in-Jewish" self.

For Lansky, Yiddish must on the contrary be revived within an open society, in a marketplace of competing ideas and competing identities. He has had the chutzpah to dream up a radically new home for Yiddish, a physical home with spiritual overtones, and one that under a single roof manages to combine a number of competing Jewish identities of its

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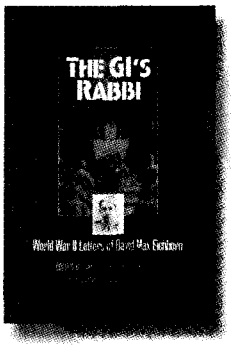

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Power Shortage

The United States of Europe: The New Superpower and the End of American Supremacy

by T.R. Reid

Penguin. 305 pp. $25.95

Reviewed by
Jakub J. Grygiel

HERALDING THE decline of the U.S. is a cyclical business. Every ten or twenty years, along comes a new batch of books on the end of American supremacy. In the 1980's, spurred by Paul Kennedy's influential work on the rise and decline of great powers, the fashion was to argue that the U.S. had reached its peak of vitality and was doomed to be overtaken by the rapidly developing East Asian tigers, led by Japan. Over the past few years, especially since the war in Iraq, we have had a new surge of books on the inevitable waning of American influence in the world; examples include Jeremy Rifkin's *The European Dream* and Charles Kupchan's *The End of the American Era*.

The main difference between the current batch and that of the 1980's lies in the identity of the challenger. It is now no longer Asia but Europe, with the European Union (EU) perceived as an increasingly coherent political actor that not only has power, exemplified by its large market and strong currency, but also a clear objective to serve as a counterweight to the United States. T.R. Reid's book, *The United States of Europe*, fits perfectly into this literature.

The author, a reporter who has served successively as the London and Tokyo bureau chief of the *Washington Post*, argues that American financial supremacy has already become a significant target of attack through the common European currency, the euro. But the continent's strength is being felt in other areas as well, even if, so far, the scale of it has gone largely undetected by American observers and politicians, who continue to ignore Europe's enormous leverage and global reach.

Reid illustrates the ongoing challenge with a series of lively anecdotes. He tells the tale, for instance, of the defeat of Jack Welch, the chairman of General Electric, at the hands of the EU regulator Mario Monti; this, he writes, was an astounding case of Europe's ability to stop one of the largest U.S. companies from merging with another U.S. company, Honeywell. Nor was Welch the only American mogul to meet his "Waterloo" (Reid's term). Bill Gate's Microsoft was similarly forced to rewrite the code of its Windows operating system in order to sell it on the European market without running afoul of antitrust laws.

To stress the growing economic might of the EU, Reid also focuses attention on some of the continent's most innovative companies, like Nokia and Airbus, both of which have already successfully captured the lion's share of their markets from U.S. firms (Motorola and Boeing, respectively). And he reminds us that European companies have been on a shopping spree in our country, acquiring a vast portfolio of businesses that have traditionally been in American hands; the list includes Brooks Brothers, Taster's Choice Coffee, Random House, and Chrysler, to name only a few. As a result, a grow-

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ing percentage of the U.S. workforce is subject to decisions taken in Helsinki, Salzburg, or Milan.

Is Europe's rise a good thing? In many ways, Reid contends, the EU is a remarkable and indeed a welcome achievement. Out of the devastation of World War II, statesmen like Jean Monnet, Robert Schuman, Konrad Adenauer, and Alcide De Gasperi masterfully translated the desire to prevent another cataclysm into a positive plan of action. In placing key industrial sectors like coal and steel under a common management, these leaders traded portions of state sovereignty for greater interdependence, increasingly thinner frontiers, and, finally, a common market—all with the objective of minimizing the friction that might lead to a new continent-wide war.

But the fathers of the EU, Reid hastens to add, had a second goal as well: to balance the economic and political strength of the U.S., which had emerged from World War II as the preeminent world power. In this sense, the willingness of individual European states to yield some of their national sovereignty did not mean a straightforward abandonment of their imperial histories and ambitions. On the contrary, the wish to avoid another war went hand in hand with the desire to restore Europe to its proper position in the global hierarchy of power.

Today, Reid concludes, the EU has achieved or is on the brink of achieving both goals, and is poised to exercise significant leverage against the United States.

As a supporter of the EU, Reid appears to sympathize with its broader goals and to embrace the challenge it poses to the U.S. But his contention that the EU has reached the status of a superpower is at odds with the facts, and the notion that it is pursuing a coherent "counterweight strategy" remains to be demonstrated.

To begin with, although the EU may be influential in global markets,

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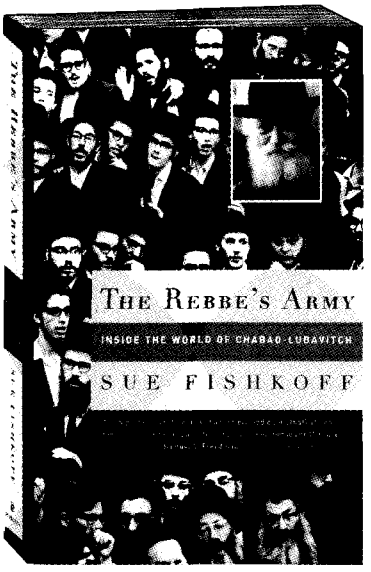

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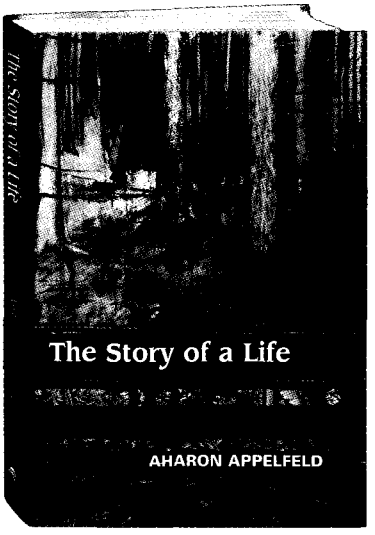

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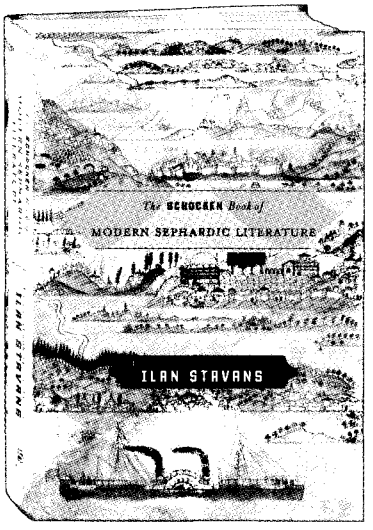

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it is far from being a paragon of innovation or a juggernaut of economic power. Reid's description of the European scene glosses over such huge and disturbing trends as the dramatic aging of the population and the growing and restless Muslim minority. These developments are not only impairing the fiscal health of the EU, already unbalanced by an overly generous welfare system, but are causing increased social tensions of which we already have had dramatic foretastes in Holland and Spain. (See, in COMMENTARY, David Pryce-Jones, "The Islamization of Europe?," December 2004, and Arthur Waldron, "Europe's Crisis," February 2005.) If Madrid-style bombings spread, moreover, the EU may find that the help of the U.S. is more essential to its survival than any counterweight strategy it may be entertaining.

Reid also seriously underestimates the importance of military power, and the implications of the EU's lack of it. To build up its global influence, he correctly notes, the EU has been doling out foreign aid in larger quantities and to a larger number of states than does the U.S. The theory behind this exercise is that "hard [i.e., military] power is so costly to maintain—and so likely to generate hatred from those who are weaker—that soft power amounts to greater power."

This may indeed be the European way of looking at things. And it is certainly true that, both at home and abroad, European states have chosen in Reid's words to "scrimp on tanks, missiles, and aircraft carriers in order to spend more on schools, health care, and pensions." But he does not tell us what follows from this choice. At a minimum, the EU lacks any ability to project its military power outside its borders or even in its immediate backyard, as we saw in the case of the Balkan conflict in the 1990's. Even when it comes to humanitarian aid, Europe is hobbled by military weakness; following the tsunami calamity, it was the USS Abraham Lincoln and other American vessels, not ships flying EU member-state flags, that ferried aid to Indonesia and other areas of the disaster zone. Inexorably, an EU lacking a sizable military force will remain reliant on U.S. protection, and as a result will be subject to U.S. influence in the international arena.

Finally, even if the EU were miraculously to acquire the necessary hardware to become a military counter to the U.S., it would continue to lack strategic coherence. Institutionally, Reid acknowledges, the EU has a limited capacity to pursue a common foreign policy, but throughout his book he stresses the power of other unifying factors, of which anti-Americanism is the most salient. But here, quite apart from the inadequacies of mere adversarial sentiment as a serious strategic resource, Reid strongly exaggerates the depth of the sentiment itself.

The personalities cited by Reid to prove his point are all of the same ilk as the left-of-center Romano Prodi, the president of the European Commission, and the semi-retired Giscard d'Estaing of France, whose disdain for America goes back a long way. But these two are hardly Europe's only voices, or even fully representative. As Reid himself points out in an appendix, some member states, particularly in eastern or "New Europe," are less anti-American or more pro-American than others. And there are even staunchly pro-American politicians in "Old Europe," from Tony Blair in Great Britain to Silvio Berlusconi in Italy to Nicholas Sarkozy in France.

Reid's book is a useful reminder of the noble ideas that gave an initial push to European unification, and of the economic challenges posed by Europe's common market. But in arguing that Europe is generating unstoppable momentum, it inflates those challenges into a threat that scarcely exists and diverts attention from much more menacing threats that press upon the U.S. and Europe alike.

Exile's Return

Magic Seeds
by V.S. Naipaul
Knopf. 288 pp. $25.00

Reviewed by
Thomas Meaney

IN HIS Nobel Prize lecture in 2001, V.S. Naipaul announced that he had reached the twilight of his literary career. There was, he claimed, very little that he—or any novelist for that matter—had left to write. "I have no faith in the survival of the novel," he remarked more recently. "The world has changed, and people do not have the time to give that a book requires."

The story of the young Naipaul, who left the obscure Indian community in Trinidad where he was born in 1932 to study English literature on a government scholarship at Oxford, is by now well known. Fired with the will to publish, Naipaul confined himself for two years to an attic in London where he wrote his first comic masterpiece, *A House for Mr. Biswas* (1961; two minor novels, *The Mystic Masseur* and *Miguel Street*, had preceded it). Since then, splitting his work between fiction and non-fiction, he has produced at least two more outstanding novels, *In a Free State* (1971) and *A Bend in the River* (1979), along with a series of penetrating first-hand investigations into subjects as diverse as the rise of Islamic states to a tour of the American South.

In his novels Naipaul has concentrated on the themes of exile, alienation, and the decay of civilizations. At a glance he appears to be the heir of Conrad, Kipling, and Graham Greene, and, among Indian writers, R.K. Narayan. But Naipaul defies categories and precursors alike. Unaffiliated with any academic institution (something rare among writers today), he instinctively rejects the

THOMAS MEANEY, *a new contributor, is a writer living in New York.*

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idea of fiction-writing as a craft that can be taught. And yet his novels have come to define what academics mean by "post-colonial"—an increasingly vast swath of contemporary literature that he has furnished, paradoxically, with some of its most atypical and unsettling exemplars. Naipaul offers no excuses for the inhabitants of the dark corners of the world with which his work is concerned; he depicts them uncompromisingly, in all of their backwardness, fashioning each book into a neatly packaged nightmare for any politically correct literary taxonomist.

Magic Seeds, his latest novel, is no exception. The book traces the fate of Willie Chadran, the hapless antihero of Naipaul's 2001 novel, *Half a Life*. In that earlier work—the two books can be read independently—Willie, the son of a Brahmin father and a low-caste mother who married in a fit of Gandhian idealism, leaves his native India for a university education in 1950's London. There he finds himself adrift against the backdrop of a bewildering bohemia. His college friend, Percy Cato, marshals him to the beat of the sexual revolution, but his encounters both with Percy's girlfriend and with prostitutes are fumbling failures, reminiscent of the experiences of Ralph Singh in Naipaul's 1967 London novel, *The Mimic Men*:

> We seek sex and are left with two private bodies on a stained bed. The larger erotic dream, the god, has eluded us. It is so whenever, moving out of ourselves, we look for extensions of ourselves. It is with cities as it is with sex. We seek the physical city and find only a conglomeration of private cells.

One of the "private cells" Willie manages to befriend in *Half a Life* is Roger, a young lawyer who helps him publish a modest collection of stories. Although the book does not receive much attention, it finds its way into the hands of a Portuguese woman, Ana, who tracks down its author. Willie marries Ana and follows her back to her estate in East Africa, where he listlessly spends the next eighteen years shooting guns and perfecting his sexual technique with African women. At the end of *Half a Life*, Willie has abandoned Ana and Africa to join his sister Sarojini, who has struck an "international marriage" of her own with a documentary filmmaker in Berlin.

Taking up where *Half a Life* leaves off, *Magic Seeds* opens in a German café, where Sarojini chastises her forty-one-year-old brother for not having made more of his life. For inspiration, she encourages him to read Gandhi (the man indirectly responsible for their parents' disastrous marriage and always a source of suspicion in Naipaul). She also enchants Willie with her own "complete intellectual system" and trite

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A new list is now available of Swiss bank account holders who were probably or possibly victims of Nazi persecution. The list, resulting from further negotiations with Swiss banks, is part of the claims process under the Settlement of the Holocaust Victim Assets class action litigation in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York, Chief Judge Edward R. Korman presiding. To date, the Court has authorized repayment of more than $220 million from the Settlement Fund to bank account owners or their heirs.

The new list of Swiss bank account holders is on the website of the Claims Resolution Tribunal,www.crt-ii.org. Applications are also available on this website. Please call the telephone number below if you are unable to view this new list of bank account holders.

* Individuals who believe that they are owners, or heirs of owners, of the accounts included in the new list must file an application.
* Applications may only be submitted for the accounts appearing on the new list.
* If you previously filed an application with the Claims Resolution Tribunal for another account and you now want to claim an account on the new list, you must submit a new application.
* There is no fee or other charge for filing and processing claims.
* Deadline for filing new applications: July 13, 2005.

A list of organizations that will assist individuals with the applications is included with the claim forms and is available at www.crt-ii.org.

Please check the website of the Claims Resolution Tribunal,www.crt-ii.org, periodically for updates regarding the Settlement.

For more information and to obtain applications:

www.crt-ii.org

Telephone: 1-800-697-6064

Email: Claims@crt.ch

Also published on the website www.crt-ii.org is a new list of 36 names of Holocaust Era insurance policyholders who had policies issued by the Austrian insurer Der Anker which, because of special circumstances, are covered by the Settlement. Insurance claims forms may also be downloaded from this website.

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Maoist maxims ("Sometimes in a storm beautiful old trees are uprooted"). Without much ado, he agrees to join a fledgling guerrilla war against landowners back in India. The fight is being led by a radical leader named Kandapalli—"the most important man in the world"—who has refined the caste revolution by taking a bottom-up approach: "Revolution was to come from below, from the village, from the people. There was to be no place in this movement for middle-class masqueraders."*

And so Willie goes off to his little war. In India he meets his contact, Joseph, a shady university professor, who dispatches him to a commune in the jungle. But before long, in the company of his new comrades, he realizes he has made a grave mistake. He is among the "trousers people"—the exact type of middle-class romantics he had sought to avoid. This cast of incompetent ideologues is depicted by Naipaul as pitilessly as anything in Evelyn Waugh. One of them has joined the revolution because he is a cuckold; another simply because he is small; another, aptly named Einstein, because he failed in his career as a mathematician.

Writing despondent letters to Sarojini, who regretfully confirms that he is "among psychopaths," Willie eventually succumbs to the revolutionaries' "philosophy of murder" and obeys an order to kill a landowner, which lands him in jail. There he has the further misfortune of being surrounded by Maoist and Leninist texts he finds too tedious to read.

Although these chapters include some of the book's most riveting prose, Naipaul only loosely sketches the plot of the India section—we are never actually sure where we are, or how much time has passed. As if to abandon any pretense of realism, he finally has Willie rescued by a remote figure from his past—the lawyer Roger—who extricates him from prison on the basis of his long-ago book of stories. "It says here you were a pioneer of Indian writing," explains Willie's warden upon releasing him.

The last third of *Magic Seeds* is occupied by Willie's return to London, where he stays with Roger at his house in St. John's Wood and soon makes a daily habit of sleeping with Roger's wife, Perdita (whom he had desired 30 years earlier). In the penultimate chapter, Roger himself recounts, in monologue form, an affair he has had with Marian, an amateur artist, who once helped take care of his aging father and with whom he was able to cultivate, to the point of perversion, his sexual fetish for the lower classes.

Sex takes on an even more perverted, if baffling, role at the end of the book, when Willie and Roger attend a wedding for the son of an old friend, a West African diplomat named Marcus whose self-professed goal in life has been to produce a completely white grandchild and show him off in public; during the wedding ceremony, one of Marcus's two grandchildren—whether black or white is unclear—farts and draws suspicion along racial lines from the assembled guests.

One thing *is* clear: sex, which has nearly always been an unfulfilling, isolating experience in Naipaul, takes on in *Magic Seeds* a grand if rather blunt metaphoric significance. Roger's sexual lethargy signals the decline of English gentry, Marcus's "recessive" racial impulse suggests the impending immigrant ascendancy. Whereas, for Willie, sex has always served as a means of collapsing back into himself, for Roger and Marcus it functions to eradicate history. The "magic seeds" of the novel are, in fact, precisely these shortcuts—receptacles of misplaced hopes, whether in the form of transcendental sex, a delusional war, or amateur art.

NAIPAUL HAS said that plot can be a "burden" for the contemporary novel—that sometimes the best an author can hope for is to leave a few vivid images in the reader's mind. In *Magic Seeds*, he takes this philosophy very far—perhaps too far. We are left with plenty of images, but at the end of the book Willie Chandran remains as frustratingly overshadowed by Naipaul's own voice as when we began. The negligently crafted plot, combined with that looming voice, undercuts any deep involvement on the part of the reader in Willie's failure to determine his own character, and makes him a considerably less interesting one to watch than many an earlier Naipaul protagonist. "The world is what it is," Naipaul has written elsewhere; "men who are nothing, who allow themselves to become nothing, have no place in it." *Magic Seeds* is the faithful but, finally, unmoving story of such a nothing.

Still, despite its faults, the book remains noteworthy for its masterful prose alone—and for those indelible images. Transcribing Willie's thoughts, Naipaul ends on a wonderful note, characteristically coupling implacable skepticism with his own brand of throat-catching sympathy: "It is wrong to have an ideal view of the world. That's where the mischief starts. That's where everything starts unraveling. But I can't write to Sarojini about that."

* Naipaul may be loosely basing Kandapalli on Charu Mazumdar, a Maoist fanatic who instigated the 1970's Naxalite uprisings in Andra Pradesh.

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Cops and Citizens

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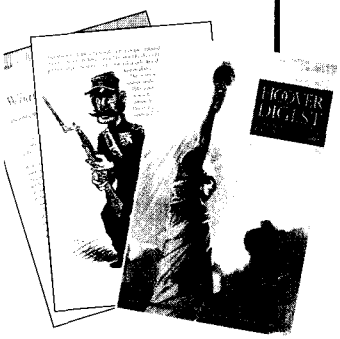

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As a newly promoted patrol supervisor in Manhattan, I learned a lesson that stuck with me for the rest of my thirty-five years in policing. An inspector (a God-like rank to a sergeant) took me to a meeting with citizens angry at cops.

The confrontation took place with a group of reform Democrats on upper Broadway near Columbia University. The crowd was largely, if not exclusively, Jewish. The big, ruddy-faced Irish inspector in a rumpled suit was known for his curt manner, but he listened patiently to complaints about how cops were rude and indifferent to citizens' problems, spending more time sitting around restaurants having free coffee and meals than on assigned foot patrol.

Baby faced and with a crisp new uniform, I silently conceded that many of the criticisms were justified. But the charges got more serious. Cops were unnecessarily rough, outright brutal, racist, and fascist and pushed people around at whim.

People of the Jewish faith were, in fact, underrepresented on the force. It was a safe guess that none of the people present were acquainted with a cop or had a relative in the department. The more grievous charges stemmed from the common misconception that the police were the beginning and end of the criminal justice system. Cops were expected to stop crime and to subdue potentially lethal people with the magical judo often seen in television shows and movies.

Finally, the inspector said: **"Ladies and gentlemen, just remember one thing. If it weren't for us cops, you'd have to do what we do!"**

A silence fell. I could picture people's imaginations at work, conjuring up images of dangerous criminals, drunks, or deranged individuals threatening them, without a cop arriving to protect the innocent by putting themselves in harm's way. People also envisioned gory accidents, dealing with suicides or the bodies of elderly people found alone in their apartments weeks after their deaths, and the myriad of other unpleasant duties shouldered by the police.

The tone of the meeting abruptly changed. People assured us that they weren't anti-cop. They had reasonable complaints, but the main purpose of the meeting was to see how they could help the police do their jobs.

I took away from the meeting the conviction that, **to be effective, cops and communities need frank discussions**. Rank-and-file cops improve their behavior when exposed to public opinion. In turn, when citizens learn the complexities of the police job, they are more inclined to form partnerships with the police to keep their neighborhoods safe. Cops learn that support from law-abiding citizens is their best asset. It is the civilian who dials 911 to report a crime, who helps police gather evidence, who volunteers to testify, and, who as a juror, believes police testimony.

I served as police chief for two large cities after retiring from the NYPD with the rank of inspector. During those eighteen years, I found that frequent, candid discussions between beat cops and citizens weren't mushy, feel-good public relations. Meetings like the one on Broadway, and those I instituted in Kansas City, Missouri, and San Jose, California, reduce crime, increase cops' job satisfaction, and improve people's quality of life.

—Joseph D. McNamara

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